ITALY

AND

HER INVADERS

535—553

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CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR.

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Sources:—

PROCOPIUS de Bello Gotthico, i. 5–7; ii. 26–38.

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(When quotations are made thus, ii. 26, the reference is to the volume and page of the Bonn edition. When they are made thus, De B. G. i. 5, the reference is to the book and chapter of the History of the Gothic War[1].)

The Truceless War.

IT was 'a truceless war' which Justinian's ambassador had denounced against the cringing Theodahad when he heard of the murder of Amalasuntha. And in truth all the schemings and machinations of the Byzantine Court had been rewarded beyond their deservings by as fair and honourable an excuse for war as ever prince could allege. Lilybaeum and

[1] A new and critical edition of the De Bello Gotthico of Procopius (greatly superior to the slovenly Bonn edition), with an Italian translation, is being published at Rome by the Istituto Storico Italiano, edited by Domenico Comparetti. Unfortunately for me only the first book has yet appeared (1895).

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Gratiana, Sicilian forts and Hunnish deserters, had all faded into the background. The great Emperor now appeared upon the scene in his proper character as Earthly Providence, preparing to avenge, on an ungrateful and cowardly tyrant, the murder of the noble daughter of Theodoric. The pretext was better than that put forth for the Vandal War, the foe infinitely baser. At the same time it might perhaps be discovered that, notwithstanding the ambassador's brave words about a truceless war, the Earthly Providence was not unwilling to arrange terms with the murderer if it could secure any advantage for itself by doing so.

In the summer of 535, nine years after Justinian's accession to the throne[1], the armies were sent forth from Constantinople, and the Gothic War began.

Troops sent to Dalmatia.

Troops, the number of whom is not stated, but probably not more than 3000 or 4000, were sent by land to invade the great Gothic province of Dalmatia, on the east of the Hadriatic. This province (as was explained in a previous volume[2]) was larger than the present kingdom of Dalmatia, since it included also a good deal of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its capital was still Salona, that great city close to which rose the vast palace of Diocletian (now represented by half of the modern town of Spalato), the city where Nepos reigned after he had been driven from the halls of the Palatine, where his rival Glycerius chanted mass in

[1] Justinian's reign commenced April 1, 526. The words of Procopius do not necessarily imply that the war began on the ninth anniversary of the accession, and Peter's report of his mission could hardly reach Constantinople till June, 535.

[2] Vol. i. p. 678.

the basilica, where Odovacar avenged his murder by the death of Ovida and Viator. BOOK V. CH. 1.

The commander of the Dalmatian army was himself a barbarian by birth, a Gepid of the name of Mundus; a man whose fiery valour was not chilled by age, and who was heartily loyal to the Emperor[1]. It was Mundus who, during the sedition of the NIKA, when the throne of Justinian seemed rocking to its overthrow, had penetrated with a band of Heruli to the Hippodrome, where Hypatius at that moment was being saluted as Emperor, and had, in co-operation with Belisarius, by a ruthless massacre of the insurgents, succeeded in stamping out the rebellion. At the outset of the present campaign his operations were completely successful. The Goths who met his invading army were defeated, and he marched on to Salona, which he entered unopposed. 535. Mundus general of the Dalmatian army. 532.

The chief interest, however, was excited by the Italian expedition, commanded by Belisarius, the successful combatant with Persia, the conqueror of Africa —Belisarius who had been drawn a few months before in his triumphal car through the streets of Constantinople, and who now, sole Consul for the year, was setting forth to gather fresh laurels in the country where the Marcelli and the Fabii gathered theirs eight centuries ago. Belisarius commander-in-chief of the Italian army.

The chief generals under Belisarius were Constantine, Bessas, and Peranius. Constantine was a native of Thrace, a brave and strenuous lieutenant of the great His generals: Constantine,

[1] Clinton thinks that this Mundus is the same as the Mundo, grandson of Attila, whom, in the war of Sirmium, Theodoric's troops delivered from the Byzantine general Sabinianus (vol. iii. p. 396). This is possible, but does not to me seem probable. 505.

BOOK V. CH 1. 535. commander, but rapacious, fierce, and not imbued with the soldierly instinct of subordination, as was eventually proved by the strange events which ended his career.

Bessas, Bessas also came from Thrace, but was of Gothic descent, and we are expressly told[1] that he was 'one of the race who had of old dwelt in Thrace, but did not follow Theodoric.' He too, though brave and warlike, showed on a critical occasion a selfish and grasping nature, which preferred its own ignoble gains to military duty and the most obvious interests of the Empire[2].

Peranius. Peranius came from the far east of the Empire. He was the eldest son of Gurgenes, king of Iberia, part of that province between Caucasus and Ararat which we now call Georgia. In the course of the endless tussle
525. between the Roman Emperor and the Persian King, Iberia was invaded by the Persian army; and Gurgenes, finding himself unable to defend his dominions, and disappointed of the expected help from Justinian, fled to the mountains which divided his country from Colchis, and there seems to have maintained a straitened but honourable independence. As the dynasty was Christian, its princes naturally inclined to Constantinople rather than to Ctesiphon. Thus it was that Peranius entered the service of the Emperor, in which he soon rose to all but the highest position.

Subordinate officers. The subordinate officers were—of the cavalry, Valentine, Magnus, and Innocentius; of the infantry,

[1] Procopius, De Bell. Goth. i. 16; ii. 81.

[2] The career of Bessas suggests some points of comparison with that of Marshal Bazaine.

Herodian, Paulus, Demetrius, and Ursicinus; none of whom require at present any special notice on our part. The commander of the Isaurian contingent was named Ennes. Belisarius was attended by a large body-guard of tried and daring soldiers; and, in a capacity perhaps resembling that of a modern aide-de-camp, Photius, Antonina's son by a former marriage, accompanied his renowned stepfather.

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Number of the host.

The total number of the army which was setting forth to reconquer Italy was only 7500 men, scarcely more than the equivalent of one legion out of the thirty which followed Caesar's footsteps. How it figured on the muster-rolls of the Empire it is not easy to say. We are told that there were 4000 soldiers 'of the Catalogues and the Foederati,' 3000 Isaurians, 200 confederate Huns, and 300 Moors. The 'Catalogues' must in some way represent the dwindled Legions; as the *Foederati*, drawn perhaps from the medley of Teutonic and Slavonic peoples who roamed along the banks of the Lower Danube, represent the *Socii* of the early days of Rome. It will be observed by the reader how large a proportion the gallant Isaurian highlanders, those Swiss of the Byzantine empire, bore to the whole army, and we shall have frequent occasion in the course of the war to notice the service rendered to Belisarius by their mountaineering skill and headlong bravery.

The army only nominally Roman.

After all, the armament, though it gloried in the title of Roman, and was sometimes called Greek in derision by its enemies, was Roman or Greek only in name. It was essentially a barbarian band. Every great exploit which we hear of in connection with it was performed, as a rule, by some Gepid, or Herul,

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or Isaurian. But the barbaric strength and stolid stalwart courage of the soldiers were directed by generals who still cherished some of the traditions of scientific warfare which had been elaborated in the twelve centuries of the Roman Republic and Empire; and at the centre of the whole machine was the busy brain of Belisarius, a man of infinite resource and patience as well as courage, and certainly one of the greatest strategists that the world has ever seen.

Cavalry the chief arm.

The student who remembers how the battles of Republican Rome were generally won, namely, by the disciplined valour of the heavy-armed foot-soldiers of the Legion, experiences some surprise when he finds that the victories of Belisarius were chiefly won by his cavalry, armed with the bow and arrow, a force which, as has been already observed, may perhaps be compared to the mounted rifles of a modern army, but which certainly five centuries before was more celebrated in the tactics of Parthia than in those of Rome.

Secret of the victories which Belisarius was to win.

At the outset of the first campaign it may be interesting to quote from a later page of Procopius[1] the reasons which Belisarius himself, in conversation with his friends, assigned for the long series of victories which he had then achieved over the Goths:—

The Goths had no force of mounted bowmen (*Hippotoxotai*).

'In public the Romans naturally expressed their wonder at the genius of Belisarius which had achieved such a victory, but in private his friends [no doubt including Procopius himself] enquired of him what was the token which, in the first day of successful engagement with the enemy, had led him to conclude that in this war he should be uniformly victorious. Then

[1] ii. 128–9.

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he told them that, at the beginning, when the engagement had been limited to a few men on each side, he had studied what were the characteristic differences of each army, in order that when the battles commenced on a larger scale he might not see his small army overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers. The chief difference which he noted was that all the Romans and their Hunnish allies were good archers on horseback (*Hippotoxotai*). The Goths, on the other hand, had none of them practised this art. Their cavalry fought only with javelins and swords, and their archers were drawn up for battle as infantry, and covered by the cavalry. Thus the horsemen, unless the battle became a hand-to-hand encounter, having no means of replying to a discharge of weapons from a distance, were easily thrown into confusion and cut to pieces, while the foot-soldiers, though able to reply to a volley of arrows from a distance, could not stand against sudden charges of horse. For this reason Belisarius maintained that the Goths in these encounters would always be worsted by the Romans.'

Easy occupation of Sicily,

As yet, however, there was little opportunity for the display of military skill on the part of Belisarius, for his first laurels were all easily gathered, in the region of politics rather than of war. His instructions were to land in Sicily, nominally again making of that island only a house of call on his way to Carthage; if he found that he could occupy the island with little trouble he was to do so, but if there was likely to be tough opposition he was to leave it for the present and proceed to Africa. The former alternative was that which he adopted. He found the Sicilians all ready and eager to become subjects of the Emperor.

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535 except Palermo.

Catana, Syracuse[1], and every other city in Sicily, opened her gates to him. Only in Panormus (Palermo) was there a Gothic garrison strong enough to oppose the wishes of the inhabitants; and to the siege of Palermo he now addressed himself.

The Goths deeply resent the defection of the Sicilians.

This eager defection of the islanders from the Gothic rule was a deep disappointment to their late lords, and was long and bitterly remembered by them. Sicily was still rich in the wealth that had been stored up there since the days of Gelon, rich in all manner of fruits, above all rich in corn, of which it sent large exports every year to Rome. For this reason the Roman inhabitants had prayed Theodoric that they might be left to themselves, and not vexed by the presence of large bodies of Gothic troops. Their request had been listened to; they had been left for the most part to their own sense of honour to defend the connection which had benefited them so greatly and had imposed such light burdens upon them. And this was their return. Not a city defended, not a skirmish fought, no pretence of overwhelming necessity forthcoming; but as soon as the insignificant armament of Belisarius hove in sight, every emblem of Gothic domination torn down and the islanders vying with one another in demonstrations of servility towards Belisarius and his master. So keenly was this ingratitude felt by the Goths that, as we shall see, eleven years afterwards, when there was a talk of peace between them and the Empire, and the Gothic King seemed to be in a position to dictate its terms, one of his indispensable conditions was that there

[1] Sinderith was the name of the Gothic governor of Syracuse (Jord. De Reb. Geticis, lx).

should be no interference with the revenge of his nation on ungrateful Sicily [1]. BOOK V. CH. 1.

535. Siege of Palermo.

Belisarius, having reconnoitred Palermo, decided that the fortifications on the landward side were too strong to be attacked with any hope of success. Of these fortifications no vestige now remains, and indeed the very site of the ancient city, successively Carthaginian, Greek, and Roman, is hopelessly obliterated by the busy prosperity of the modern capital of Sicily. Three features of the landscape only can we indisputably claim as identical with those which met the eyes of Belisarius. They are (1) the beautiful, land-guarded bay (reminding the traveller of the bay of Naples), from which the city derived its Greek name, *All-Anchorage* [2]; (2) the rich plain stretching inland, and now known as the Golden Shell (Concha d'Oro); (3) the grand natural fortress of Monte Pellegrino, 2000 feet high, a few miles out of the city, rising, like the Rock of Gibraltar, square and steep out of the sea to northward of the bay. Here Hamilcar Barca maintained for three years a sturdy opposition to Rome near the close of the First Punic War. But the Gothic garrison of Sicily resorted to no such desperate measure of defence against the army of Belisarius. Trusting in the strength of their walls, they refused to surrender the city and bade him begone with all

B.C. 247 to 244.

Palermo taken.

The line of wall skirting the harbour was that which attracted the attention of the Byzantine general. It was detached from the ordinary line of circumvallation, it was left altogether bare of soldiers, and, high as it

[1] Procopius, ii. 342 (De Bell. Gotth. iii. 16).

[2] Πάν-ορμος.

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was, when he had collected his navy in the harbour he found that their masts overtopped the battlements. With his usual fertility of resource he at once hoisted the ships' boats filled with soldiers up to the yard-arms of the vessels, and told his men to clamber from the boats out on to the parapet. The manœuvre, though somewhat resembling that tried by the Vene-

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tians at the Latin siege of Constantinople, would have been too perilous to be executed in the face of an active foe. As it was, practised against an unguarded wall, it was completely successful. Soon the Byzantine soldiers, from their position of vantage on the high sea-wall, were shooting their arrows down into the ranks of the enemy in the city. The Goths were cowed by the unexpected sight, and offered terms of capitulation which Belisarius at once accepted.

Conquest of Sicily complete.

Thus was all Sicily now subject to the Emperor's rule, and soon found itself paying heavy tax and toll to the imperial exchequer[1]. The conquest of Sicily, peaceful comparatively as was its character, had occupied about seven months. On the last day of the year the Consul Belisarius, who had commenced his year of office while his victories over the Vandals were fresh in every one's mouth, closed it by a solemn procession through the streets of Syracuse, greeted by the loud and genuine applause of his soldiers and the

31 Dec. 535. Belisarius lays down the consulship.

[1] By the lxxvth Novel (lxxixth in Zachariä's edition) issued in the year 537, Justinian 'secundum instar antiquitatis' placed Sicily under a Praetor who was to decide private lawsuits and provide for the expenses of the army. Appeals were to go straight to Constantinople 'quia semper Sicilia quasi peculiare aliquid commodum imperatoribus accessit' (See Bury, ii. 37).

Sicilians, upon whom his lavish hands scattered a welcome largesse of Justinian's *aurei*. BOOK V. CH. 1.

535. Effect of the conquest on Theodahad.

Meanwhile, the tidings which were coming from Sicily to Rome [1], cleverly enlarged upon at repeated audiences by the ambassador Peter, threw the wretched Theodahad into an agony of terror. Already in imagination he saw himself walking, as Gelimer had walked, a captive before his conqueror Belisarius, and heard the well-deserved cry, 'Death to the murderer of Amalasuntha!' thundered forth by the populace of Byzantium. In a private conference with Peter he consented to make peace with Justinian on the following humiliating conditions: (1) Sicily was to be abandoned to the Emperor; (2) Theodahad was to send to Justinian every year a golden crown weighing not less than 300 pounds [at present values worth about £12,000]; (3) he was to furnish 3000 warlike Goths whenever Justinian should require their services; (4) except with the Emperor's leave, the Gothic King was not to sentence any senator or any priest [Catholic priests, of course, were here meant] either to death or confiscation of goods [2]; (5) he was not to confer the dignity of Patrician, or any office involving senatorial rank, upon any of his subjects without the same gracious permission; (6) at the Hippodrome, the Theatre, and all places of public resort the people were always to shout 'Vivat Justinianus' before they

Negotiations for peace.

[1] It seems probable that Theodahad through the greater part of 535 was at Rome, not at Ravenna.

[2] This stipulation seems to me to confirm the suggestion made in a previous chapter (vol. iii. p. 483) as to the meaning of the charge against Boëthius that he was 'guilty of desiring the safety of the Senate.'

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shouted 'Vivat Theodatus;' (7) never was a statue of bronze or any other material to be raised to Theodahad alone, but wherever he stood Justinian must stand beside him on his right side.

Character of the conditions imposed on Theodahad.

The conditions were degrading enough and well exemplified the Byzantine habit of making the subjection of an inferior as galling and as wounding to his self-love as possible. That undefined relation of dependence on the Empire which Odovacar and Theodoric had ignored rather than contradicted, and into which Amalasuntha had been gradually sinking, was here proclaimed as offensively as possible by the Augustus, and admitted as abjectly as possible by the *Thiudans*. Though the word belongs to a later century, Theodahad would have become by this compact virtually the *vassal* of Justinian. Still, even this relationship, though marking a great fall from the proud 'moral hegemony' of Theodoric, might in the course of centuries have worked not unfavourably for the happiness of Italy. Leaning on the arm of her elder sister of Byzantium, the new Romano-Gothic state might have gradually reconciled Teutonic force with classical culture. In the convulsions which shook the Eastern world in the seventh century, her loyalty might have been a stay and staff to the Eastern Caesar. Greece and Italy united, and occupying their natural place at the head of European civilisation, might have formed front against the Saracen in the East, against the Frank in the West. At the least, had such a confederacy been possible, the Hesperian land would have escaped the extortions of Byzantine blood-suckers on the one hand, the ravages of half-savage Lombards on the other.

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Theodahad raises the market against himself.

But it is useless to speculate on what might have been. The portentous cowardice of Theodahad rendered him unable even to wait for an interchange of embassies with Constantinople to know whether his terms were accepted or rejected. He had not yet despatched his own ambassador, when he sent for Peter, who on his leisurely journey had now reached Albano, the second station on the Appian Way, that delightful little town which, nestling under the high volcanic cone of Monte Cavo, looks down on the one side over its own peaceful little Alban Lake, and on the other over the broad Campagna to the faintly-seen towers of Rome. Peter came, when summoned, to yet another private audience with the King. The following strange dialogue then passed between them :—

Dialogue between the King and the Ambassador.

Theodahad. 'Do you think, Ambassador, that the Emperor will be pleased with the compact into which we have entered?'

Peter. 'I conjecture that he will.'

Theod. 'But if he should chance to quarrel with the terms, what will happen then?'

Peter. 'Then, noble sir, the next thing will be that you will have to fight.'

Theod. 'Is that fair, dear Ambassador?'

Peter. 'Where is the unfairness, my good friend, in each of you following the bent of his own genius?'

Theod. 'What do you mean by that?'

Peter. 'I mean this. All *your* pleasure is in acting the part of a philosopher; but Justinian finds his, in acting as beseems a noble Roman Emperor. For a man who practises the precepts of philosophy to devise the death of his fellow-creatures, especially on so large

BOOK V. CH. 1. 535. a scale as this war involves, is quite unbecoming; and for a Platonist, it is pre-eminently necessary to keep his hands clean from human blood. But for the Emperor to vindicate his rights to a land which once formed part of his Empire is in no way unbecoming.'

Theodahad is willing to make a full surrender of his crown.

The result of this dialogue (in which it suited both King and Ambassador to ignore the fact that the hands of the former were already stained with the blood of his benefactress) was, that Theodahad swore to the Ambassador to sell his crown to Justinian if he should be required to do so; and for some reason which is not expressly stated, but probably because of her admitted ascendency over the mind of Theodahad, his Queen Gudelina was made a partner in the oath. Peter on his part was made to swear that he would not disclose the last and highest offer till he had fairly put the lower offer before the Emperor, and found that it was hopeless to press it. What prudent man would thus bid against himself even in the purchase of a field? With such utter fatuity did these children of the barbarians play their little bungling game against the veteran diplomatists of Constantinople.

Return of Peter to Constantinople.

Peter was accompanied on the return embassy by Rusticus, a Roman, a priest (probably of the orthodox Church), and an intimate friend of Theodahad [1]. They

[1] Baronius, and most of the ecclesiastical historians following him, suppose that this is the embassy on which Pope Agapetus was sent to Constantinople, and that either Rusticus is another name for Agapetus or else that Procopius has blundered. Neither supposition seems to me probable or necessary. The mission of Agapetus to Constantinople took place (according to the conjecturally altered text of Anatasius; see Clinton, F. R. i. 763) on the 20th of February, 536: at least that was the day on which he

arrived at Constantinople; they stood in the presence of the Emperor; they set forth the first offer of Theodahad. Had Peter sent a private messenger to his master, or did he now, by ever so slight and scarcely perceptible a gesture, imply that, were he in Justinian's place, he would not accept the offered vassalage? We know not, but it is certain that Justinian declared that the terms, abject as was their humbleness of surrender, did not at all please him. Then Rusticus produced the Gothic King's letter, which had been reserved for this stage of the negotiations. It was a strange letter to be written by a member of the race whose forefathers swept like night over the shores of the Aegean, by a grandson and great-nephew of the brave Amal kings who stood unflinching by the side of Attila 'in that world-earthquake' on the Catalaunian plains.

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Theodahad's letter produced.

THEODAHAD TO JUSTINIAN.

'I am not, O Emperor, a new comer into the halls of kings. It was my fortune to be born a king's nephew and to be reared in a manner worthy of my race: but I am not altogether well versed in war and its confusions. From the first I have been passionately fond of literature and have spent my time in the study thereof, and thus it has been till now my lot to

entered Constantinople. Procopius does not give us precise dates for the return embassy of Peter and Rusticus, but according to the natural sequence of the narrative October or November of the previous year would be a probable time for it. It is most unlikely that a literary official like Procopius would make a mistake as to the person of Theodahad's ambassador at such a crisis. The mission of the Pope was probably a separate event.

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be always far from the clash of arms. It seems therefore unwise of me to continue to lead a life full of danger for the sake of the royal dignity, when neither danger nor dignity is a thing that I enjoy. Not danger, since that new and strange sensation perturbs my thoughts; not the royal dignity, since possession of it has, according to the general law, brought satiety.

'Therefore, if some landed property could be secured to me, bringing in a yearly income of not less than twelve cwt. of gold [£48,000], I should consider that more valuable to me than my kingship: and I am willing on those terms to hand over to thee the sovereignty of the Goths and Italians. I think that I shall thus be happier as a peaceful tiller of the soil than as a king immersed in kingly cares, no sooner out of one danger than into another. Send me then as speedily as possible a commissioner to whom I may hand over Italy and all that pertains to my kingship.'

The letter gave supreme delight to the Emperor, and obtained the following reply.

JUSTINIAN TO THEODAHAD.

Justinian's reply.

'I heard long ago by common fame that you were a man of high intelligence, and now I find by experience that this is true. You show your wisdom in declining to await the arbitrament of war, which has plunged some men who staked their all upon it into terrible disasters. You will never have occasion to repent having turned us from an enemy into a friend. You shall receive all the property that you ask for, and, in addition, your name shall be inscribed in the highest rank of Roman nobility. I now send Athanasius and Peter to exchange the needful ratifications,

and in a very short time Belisarius will come to complete the transaction thus settled between us.'

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Ambassadors sent to complete the transaction.

Athanasius was the brother of Alexander who was sent the year before as ambassador to Athalaric. The duties entrusted to him and to Peter were mainly to settle the boundaries of the new *Patrimonium* which was to be assigned to Theodahad, to put the compact in writing, and to secure it by oaths given and taken. Belisarius was sent for in all speed from Sicily to receive charge of the fortresses, arsenals, and all the machinery of government from the royal trafficker. These arrangements were probably made towards the end of the year 535.

Belisarius summoned from Sicily to Italy.

The war in Dalmatia.

When the ambassadors arrived at the Gothic Court they found the mood of Theodahad strangely altered. To understand the reason of the change we must look again at the affairs of Dalmatia. We left Mundus the Gepid there, holding the retaken capital, Salona, for Justinian. A large Gothic army under the command of Asinarius and Grippas entered the province, apparently about the middle of autumn, and approached Salona. Maurice the son of Mundus, on a reconnoitring expedition, approached too near the main body of the Gothic army and was slain. Maddened with grief, the old barbarian, his father, fell upon the Gothic host. Though he attacked in too loose order he was at first successful, and broke the ranks of the foe, but pressing on too hotly in pursuit, he was pierced by the spear of one of the fugitives and fell dead. His fall stopped the onward movement of his troops. Both armies dispersed, and neither dared to appropriate the prize of war, the city of Salona; the Romans having got altogether out of hand since the

Death of Mundus.

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535. Sibylline prophecy.

death of their general, and the Goths misdoubting both the strength of the walls and the loyalty of the citizens.

It was some slight consolation to the Romans that these reverses robbed of its terrors an old Sibylline prophecy which had been much of late in the mouths of men. This prophecy, couched in mysterious characters, which are a marvel upon the page of Procopius[1], had been thus interpreted:—

> 'First Rome reconquers Afric. Then the World
> Is with its progeny to ruin hurled.'

Belisarius' capture of Carthage had seemed to bring the end of the world alarmingly near. But now the battle of Salona reassured men's minds. It was not the world and all its inhabitants, but only *Mundus* and his too daring son, with whose fate the oracle was full.

Salona re-occupied by the imperial troops, 536.

The fortune of the Roman arms in Dalmatia was soon retrieved. Constantian, who held the office of *Comes Stabuli*[2] in the imperial household, was sent with a well-equipped army to recover Salona, which had been entered by the Goths. Having apparently the entire command of the sea, he sailed northwards from Epidamnus (Durazzo), and was soon to be seen in the offing from the coast of Epidaurus (a little

[1] In the hope of attracting philologists to make another attempt at the decipherment of these characters (which have no doubt suffered much from transcription), I here reprint them:—

ΑΕΡΙΣΑΣ ΑΡΤΑ [illegible] ΤΖΕΡΙΣΤΑΣΙ.

[In Comparetti's edition this inscription as written in the Vatican Codex, partly in Greek and partly in Roman letters, is almost legible:—

Africa capta... (n) peribit (?) or peribunt (?)
αεριcα cαρτα mudus cum natu ρεριcταλ.]

[2] The *Comes Stabuli* is not mentioned in the Notitia, but is in the Theodosian Code (Lib. xi. Tit. 17. l. 3). The Connétable of mediaeval France derives his name from this officer.

south of the modern Cattaro). The panic-stricken Gothic general Grippas, who was informed by his scouts that 'myriads of Romans were approaching by sea,' evacuated Salona and pitched his camp a little to the west of that city. Constantian sailed some hundred miles or so up the gulf and anchored at the island of Lissa, memorable to this generation for the naval battle fought there between the Italians and Austrians in 1866. Finding from his scouts that Salona was deserted he landed his troops, occupied it in force, repaired its ruinous walls, and posted 500 men to occupy the narrow pass by which it was approached from the west. After seven days of waiting, the two Gothic generals, with that feebleness and absence of resource which mark the barbarian strategy in the earlier stages of this war, simply marched back again to Ravenna.

Dalmatia sundered from the Italian state.

Dalmatia and Liburnia (or the *province* of Illyricum[1]), which had for the most part followed the fortunes of Italy for a century and a half since the death of Theodosius, were thus permanently recovered by the State, which we must in this connection call the *Eastern* Empire, although it was, to a loyal Roman, simply the Empire, one and undivided. From this time forward the eastern coast of the Hadriatic, though subject to Avar invasions, Sclavonic migrations, Bosnian kingships, maintained a more or less intimate political connection with Constantinople, till the conquests of the Venetians in the tenth century brought it back once more into the world of Italian domination.

But these were the far-reaching results of the expedition of Mundus. We have to do with the more

[1] See vol. i. p. 678.

BOOK V. CH. 1.

535. Effect of the Gothic successes in Dalmatia on Theodahad.

immediate effects of the early disasters of the imperial forces on that feeble and futile thing, the mind of King Theodahad. That royal student, if versed in the 'Republic' of Plato, had not laid equally to heart the more popular philosophy of Horace. At least he conspicuously disobeyed the precepts of that familiar ode in which 'the mortal Dellius' is exhorted to preserve a temper 'serene in arduous and reasonable in prosperous' circumstances. As pusillanimous as he had shown himself at the news of the successes of Belisarius, so intolerably arrogant did he become when the tidings reached him of the death of Mundus and his son. When the ambassadors who arrived about the same time as the news (probably somewhere about December 535) ventured to claim the fulfilment of his solemn promise to surrender the kingdom, he flatly refused. Peter spoke somewhat plainly as to the royal faithlessness. Theodahad petulantly answered, 'The privilege of ambassadors is a holy thing, but it is conceded on the supposition that it be not abused. It is admitted that the person of an ambassador who seduces the wife of a citizen of the country to which he is accredited is not sacrosanct; and I shall not scruple to apply the same principle to an ambassador who insults the King.' Peter and Athanasius made a spirited reply: 'O ruler of the Goths, you are seeking by flimsy pretexts to cover unholy deeds. An ambassador may be watched as strictly as his entertainer pleases, and therefore the talk about injury to female honour is altogether beside the mark. But as for what the ambassador *says*, be it good or bad, the praise or blame for it rests solely on him who sent him. The ambassador is a mere mouthpiece, and to

His dispute with the imperial ambassadors.

him attaches no responsibility for his words. We shall therefore say all that we heard from the lips of the Emperor: and do you listen patiently, for if you become excited you will perhaps commit some outrage on our sacred character. We declare then that the time is come for you loyally to fulfil your compact with the Emperor. Here is the letter which he wrote to you. The notes which he has addressed to the chief men among the Goths we shall hand to no one but themselves only.' BOOK V. CH. 1. 535.

Letters to the Gothic nobles.

However, the Gothic nobles who were present authorised the ambassadors to hand over their letters to Theodahad. These despatches congratulated the Goths on the near prospect of their absorption in the great polity of Rome, a state with whose laws and customs they had long ago become acquainted [in their capacity of *Foederati*]; and Justinian promised that they should find their dignity and credit increased, not diminished, by the change.

The nobles support Theodahad in his resistance.

This was not, however, the view which the Gothic nobles took of the situation. Whatever their secret contempt for the weakly truculent character of their King, they were ready to second him heartily in his present mood of defiance to the Empire. Both sides therefore prepared for that which was now to be really 'a truceless war[1].' In these preparations the winter of 535–536 wore away, and the second year of the great Gothic War commenced.

[1] Apparently however Theodahad, perhaps on hearing of Constantian's successes in Dalmatia, made one more effort at peace by sending Pope Agapetus to Constantinople: but the story of that mission will be best told a little later on, when we resume the thread of the Papal history.

CHAPTER II.

BELISARIUS AT CARTHAGE AND AT NAPLES.

Authorities.

Sources:—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Vandalico, ii. 10–17 (vol. i. pp. 447–490, ed. Bonn), and De Bello Gotthico, i. 8–10 (vol. ii. pp. 38–57).

For some African events FLAVIUS CRESCONIUS CORIPPUS, an African man of letters, who wrote a panegyric of the Emperor Justin II (565–578), and a poem called 'Johannis' in praise of the victorious campaign of John, governor of Africa, against the Moors (550). This latter poem, which was discovered by Mazuchelli in 1814, and first published in 1820, is included in the Bonn edition of the Byzantine historians. The style is good for so late an age of Latin literature.

Guides:—

In studying the topography of Neapolis I have received some assistance from *Summonte's* 'Storia di Napoli,' but my chief guides are Beloch and Capasso.

Julius Beloch, a German student of Italian antiquities, is the author of a valuable monograph ('Campanien,' Berlin, 1879) on the cities of Campania. Its usefulness is greatly increased by the beautifully executed Atlas with which it is accompanied.

The Commendatore *Bartolommeo Capasso*, one of the first archaeologists of Naples, has written a tract 'Sull' antico sito di Napoli e Palepoli,' which is a perfect quarry of information as to the Greek and Roman cities. A few details as to the course of the Neapolitan aqueducts were furnished to me by S. Capasso personally in 1882, when I had the privilege of making his acquaintance in Naples.

BOOK V. Ch. 2. 536.

Belisarius ordered to invade Italy at once.

When the news of the double-dyed treachery of Theodahad reached the Court of Constantinople orders were despatched to Belisarius to proceed with all speed to Italy and push the war against the Goths to the uttermost. He was, however, hindered for some weeks from obeying these orders, by a sudden call to another post of danger; a call which well illustrates the precarious and unenduring character of Justinian's conquests and the inherent vices of Byzantine domination.

He is prevented by bad news from Carthage.

It was a few days after Easter, in the year 536, probably therefore about the 30th or 31st of March[1], when a single ship rounded the headland of Plemmyrium, passed the fountain of Arethusa, and reached the landing-place of Syracuse. A few fugitives leaped on land and hastened to the presence of Belisarius. Chief among them was the Eunuch Solomon, in whose keeping, two years before, he had left the fortress and city of Carthage guarded by a triumphant Roman army. What causes had brought a man placed in such height of power, and a brave and prudent soldier, into so great disaster?

Relations between the imperial governor of Africa and the Moors.

Not his wars with the declared enemies of the Empire, though it is worth our while to notice even here how Justinian's conquests really paved the way for the barbarians. The Vandals had reared a kingdom in North Africa, semi-civilised it is true, but which, if left to itself, would have become wholly civilised, and which meanwhile was strong enough to keep the wild sons of the desert in check. Now, the Vandals overthrown, the Moors came on[2]. They pushed their

[1] Easter Sunday fell on the 23rd of March in the year 536 (L'Art de vérifier les Dates, p. 11).

[2] It is in a digression as to the Moors, inserted at this point of his history, that Procopius introduces the often-quoted but

BOOK V. CH. 2. forays far into the African province; in hosts of 30,000 and 50,000 at a time they invaded Numidia and Byzacene; they loudly complained that the promises by which they had been lured into the Roman alliance had been left unfulfilled; and when Solomon ventured to remind the chiefs that he held their children as hostages for their good behaviour they replied, 'You monogamist Romans may fret about the loss of your children. We who may have fifty wives apiece if it so pleases us, feel no fear that we shall ever have a deficiency of sons.'

535. In two battles the Eunuch-Governor had defeated his Moorish antagonists [1]. But still the Moorish chief Iabdas remained encamped on the high and fruitful table-land of Mount Auras, thirteen days' journey from Carthage, and from thence at every favourable opportunity swept down into the plain, pillaging, slaying, leading into captivity; nor had Solomon, though he led one expedition against him, yet been able to dislodge him thence.

improbable story of the two pillars erected by Canaanitish exiles near Tigisis in Numidia, with this inscription in Phoenician characters: 'We are they who fled from the face of Joshua the robber the son of Nun.'

[1] These were the battles of Mammas and Burgaon. The sites of these places do not appear to be identified. Mammas was the only engagement that deserved to be called a pitched battle, and here the chief difficulty arose from the confusion caused in the Roman cavalry by the sight and smell of the camels. At Burgaon the Moors were encamped on a precipitous hill. By a daring night-march—not unlike that by which Wolfe scaled the Heights of Abraham—Solomon posted some troops on the summit of the hill. The Moors, panic-stricken at finding themselves between two attacks, rushed down the hill, and (according to Procopius) 50,000 of them perished in a precipitous ravine, without one Roman soldier being slain.

Thus had events passed till the Easter of 536, and then the real, the tremendous danger of the Eunuch's position was suddenly revealed to him, in the shape of an almost universal mutiny of the Roman soldiers. We call them Roman in accordance with the usage of the times, because they served that peculiar political organisation at Constantinople which still called itself the Roman Republic[1], and because the banners under which they marched to battle still bore the world-known letters S. P. Q. R. But, as has been already hinted, probably not one soldier out of a hundred in the imperial army could speak Latin, and many of them may have hardly known sufficient Greek to find their way about the streets of Constantinople. They were Heruli from the Danube, Isaurians from the Asiatic highlands, Huns from the steppes of Scythia, Armenians from under the shadow of Ararat, anything and everything but true scions of the old Oscan and Hellenic stocks whose deeds are commemorated by Livy and Thucydides.

Mutiny of the Roman soldiers, 536.

These men, Teutons many of them by birth, and Arians by religious profession, having been permitted to marry the Vandal widows whose husbands they had slain, had expected to settle in comfort upon the Vandal lands, and live thenceforward in peace, under some loose bond of allegiance to the Emperor, as the new lords of Africa. Not such, however, was the intention of the bureaucracy of Constantinople. The usual swarm of *Logothetae*, of *Agentes in rebus*, of *Scriniarii*, settled down upon the province, intent

Their disappointed hopes.

The land question.

[1] I think the frequent references of Procopius in the account of this very mutiny to ἡ πολιτεία, illustrated by the usage of his contemporary Cassiodorus, justify this statement.

BOOK V. CH. 2.

upon sucking the last available aureus out of it for the public treasury. The lands of the conquered Vandals were all deemed to have reverted to the state, and if the husband of a Vandal widow, whether he were soldier or civilian, cultivated them, it must be under the burden of a land-tax revised every fifteen years, so strictly as to make him virtually tenant at a rack-rent under the tax-gatherer. In many cases, not even on these unfavourable terms was the occupancy of the land assigned to the soldiers. Here, then, were plentiful materials for a quarrel. On the one hand, a number of hot-blooded, stalwart men, flushed with the pride of conquest, each one with a remembrancer of his wrongs for ever at his ear, reminding him, 'Such an estate or such a villa belonged to me when I was the wife of a Vandal warrior, yet thou who hast conquered Vandals art thyself landless.' On the other side, the Eunuch-Governor and the official hierarchy, pleading the law of the State, the custom of the Empire: 'It was reasonable that the slaves, the ornaments, the portable property, should be the spoil of the soldiers. But the land, which once belonged to the Roman Empire, must revert to the Emperor and the Commonwealth of Rome, who called you forth as soldiers, trained you, armed you, paid you, not in order that you should conquer these lands for yourselves, but that they might become public property and furnish rations not for you only, but for all the soldiers of the Empire.'

Religious difficulty.

Thus was the African land-question raised. But there was also a religious difficulty. Many of the soldiers in the late army of Belisarius, especially the martial Heruli, were Arians. The Vandal priests who

still remained in Africa found access to these men, and inflamed their minds with a recital of the religious disabilities to which they, the conquerors as much as the conquered, were subject. The prohibition of Justinian was positive. No baptism nor any other religious rite was to be performed by or upon any man not holding the full, orthodox, Athanasian faith. The time of Easter was drawing nigh, at which it was usual to baptize all the children who had been born in the preceding year. No child of a Herulian would be admitted to the holy font, no Herulian himself would be permitted to share in the solemnities of Easter, unless he first renounced the creed of his forefathers, the creed which had perhaps been brought to his rude dwelling on the Danubian shore by some Arian bishop, disciple or successor of the sainted Ulfilas.

Return of four hundred Vandals.

As the evil genius of the Empire would have it, there was yet a third element of disaffection cast into the African cauldron. The Vandals whom Belisarius carried captive to Byzantium had been enrolled in five regiments of cavalry, had received the honourable name of 'Justinian's Vandals,' and had been ordered to garrison the cities of Syria against the Persians. The greater part proceeded to their appointed stations and faithfully served the Empire which had robbed them of their country. But four hundred of them, finding themselves at Lesbos with a favouring wind, hoisted their sails, forced the mariners to obey their orders, and started for Peloponnesus first and then for Africa. Arrived at the well-remembered shore, they ran their ships aground, landed, and marched off for the uncaptured stronghold of Mount Aurasius. Here they received a message from the soldiers at Carthage

who contemplated mutiny, soliciting their assistance, which, after solemn oaths and promises given and received, they agreed to furnish to the mutineers. So, when Easter drew on, all was ripe for revolt.

Solomon to be slain, 21 March.

The mutineers agreed among themselves that Solomon should be slain in the great Basilica of Carthage on Good Friday, and that this crime should be the signal for the insurrection to break out. They took little care about secresy: the guards, the shield-bearers, many even of the household servants of the Eunuch, were in the plot, but none betrayed it, so great was the longing of all for the Vandal lands. So, unsuspecting evil, sat Solomon in the great Basilica, while the ceremonies went forward which commemorated the death of Christ, and which were meant to be signalised by his own. The conspirators gathered round him. Each man, with frowns and gestures of impatience, motioned to his neighbour to do the deed of blood, but none could bring himself with his own arm to strike the blow. Either the sanctity of the place, or old loyalty to their general, or else the still unstifled voice of conscience, prevented any from volunteering for the service; and they had not taken the precaution of selecting the arch-murderer before they entered the sacred building. When the words '*Ite, jam missa est*' came from the lips of the officiating prelate, they hastened from the Basilica, each cursing the other for his cowardice and softness of heart. But 'To-morrow,' said they, 'in the same place the deed shall be done.' On the morrow Solomon again sat in the great Basilica; again his would-be murderers assembled round him, again the same invisible influence stayed their hands. When the service

The plot fails.

22 March.

was over they foamed out into the Forum, a disappointed and angry crowd. The epithets 'Traitor,' 'Coward,' 'Faint-heart' were freely bandied about among them, so freely that, feeling sure that their design must now be generally known, the chiefs of the plot left the city and began freebooting in the country districts. BOOK V. CH. 2. 536.

When Solomon discovered the danger with which he had to deal, he went round to the soldiers' quarters and exhorted those who were still remaining in the city to abide faithful to the Emperor. For five days the mutiny seemed to have been checked, but at the end of that time, when the soldiers within the city saw that their revolted comrades were pursuing their career of ravage outside unchecked, it burst out with fresh fury. The soldiers collected in the Hippodrome, and shouted out the names of Solomon and the other chief authorities in the state, loading them with every kind of coarse abuse. Theodore the Cappadocian, apparently the most popular of Solomon's officers, was sent by him to harangue them in soothing terms. Not a word of his soft eloquence was listened to; but believing him to be secretly opposed to Solomon and his policy, the mutineers with loud shouts acclaimed him as their leader. Theodore appears to have been a man of staunch loyalty, but he humoured the whim of the rebels for a few hours, in order to favour Solomon's escape. With loud and tumultuous shouts the mutineers, self-constituted guards of Theodore, escorted him to the palace of the Prefect. There they found another Theodore, captain of the guards, a man of noble character and a skilled soldier, but for the moment unpopular with these rebels. Him they slew,

The mutiny spreads.

Theodore the Cappadocian proclaimed leader.

BOOK V. Ch. 2. 536.

and having thus tasted blood, they dispersed themselves through the city, killing every man whom they met, Roman or Provincial, who was suspected of being a friend of Solomon, or who had money enough about him to make murder profitable. They entered all the houses which were not guarded by the few still loyal soldiers, and carried off all the portable plunder that they found there. At length night came on, and the mutineers, stretched in drunken sleep in the streets and forums of the city, rested from their orgie of rapine. Then Solomon and his next in command, Martin, who had been cowering for refuge all day in the chapel of the Governor's palace, stole forth to the house of Theodore the Cappadocian. He pressed them to take food, though sadness and fear had well-nigh deprived them of appetite, and then had them conveyed to the harbour. A little company of eight persons embarked in a boat belonging to one of the ships under Martin's command. These eight persons were Solomon, Martin, five officers of the Eunuch's household, and—most important of all in our eyes—the Councillor Procopius, to whom we owe the whole of this narrative. After rowing in an open boat for nearly forty miles, the fugitive Governor and his suite reached Missua, on the opposite (eastward) shore of the bay of Tunis, a place which was apparently used as a kind of supplemental port, owing to the original harbour of Carthage having become too small for its trade[1]. At Missua they felt themselves in compara-

Flight of Solomon.

[1] See the very carefully written article on Carthage in Smith's Dict. of Greek and Roman Geography, i. 551 a. The words of Procopius are: *Σταδίους τε τριακοσίους ἀνύσαντες ἀφίκοντο ἐς Μισσοίαν τὸ Καρχηδονίων ἐπίνειον* (vol. i. p. 474).

tive safety, and from hence the Eunuch despatched Martin to Valerian and the other generals commanding in Numidia, on the west of the Carthaginian province, to warn them of the mutiny, and to endeavour, under the shelter of their forces, to win back by gold or favour as many as possible of the mutineers to their old loyalty. He also wrote to Theodore, giving him a general commission to act for the imperial interests in Carthage as might seem best at the time, and then Solomon himself, probably taking some ship of war out of the roadstead at Missua, set sail for Syracuse with Procopius in his train, and, as we have seen, arrived there in safety to claim the assistance of Belisarius.

BOOK V. CH. 2. 536.

Meanwhile the insurgents, who had by this time found that Theodore the Cappadocian would not lend himself to their seditious designs, assembled on the plains of Bulla [1], a short distance to the south of Carthage, and there chose out Stutza [2], one of the body-guard of Martin, and acclaimed him as their king [3]. Stutza, if not endowed with any great strategic talents, was a man of robustness and hardihood. He found under his standards no fewer than 8000 revolted

Stutza made leader of the rebels.

[1] Probably the Bulla Mensa of Ptolemy, not Bulla Regia in Numidia, which is four days' journey from Carthage. (See Smith's Dict. of Geography, s.v. Bulla.)

[2] The Byzantine form of the name, found in Procopius and Marcellinus, is Stotzas. But the African-born writers, Corippus and Victor of Tunnuna, call him Stuzas and Stutias respectively (the latter change perhaps for metrical reasons). The editor of Corippus suggests the German 'Stutzer' (strutter) as a derivation (p. 245, ed. Bonn).

[3] Τύραννον σφίσιν εἵλοντο. The man who was 'tyrant' in the eyes of legitimate authority can hardly have been less than king to his own followers.

BOOK V. CH. 2. 536.

soldiers. These were soon joined by 1000 Vandals, partly the recent fugitives from Constantinople, partly those who had escaped the notice of the conquering host two years before. They were further joined by that usual result of anarchy in the Roman state, a large number of slaves. The united host aimed at nothing less than driving out the imperial generals and making themselves lords of the whole northern coast of Africa[1]. They at once marched to Carthage (which it is hard to understand why they should ever have quitted), and called upon Theodore to surrender the city. Josephius, one of the literary attendants of Belisarius[2], who happened to have just arrived at the capital, was sent to persuade them not to resort to any further acts of violence; but Stutza showed the soldier's disdain of the scribe and the mutineer's contempt of the rules of civilised warfare by at once putting him to death. Despair at this ruthless deed filled the hearts of the scanty defenders of Carthage, and they were on the point of surrendering the city to the insurgents.

Carthage on the point of surrender to the rebels.

Arrival of Belisarius.

Such was the state of affairs when in an hour all was changed by the arrival of Belisarius. He sailed from Syracuse with one ship, probably the same which had brought the Eunuch, and with one hundred picked men of his body-guard on board. It was twilight

[1] Much in the same way as the Mamertine mercenaries of Agathocles obtained dominion in Sicily B. C. 282, or the Mamelukes in Egypt in the thirteenth century of our era.

[2] The description of the character and office of Josephius (De Bell. Vand. ii. 15), 'clerk of the imperial guards' (τῶν βασιλέως φυλάκων γραμματεύς), 'a man of distinction and one of the household of Belisarius,' may at least illustrate the position of Procopius himself in the army.

when he arrived. The mutineers were encamped round the city, confident that on the morrow it would be theirs. Day dawned: they heard that Belisarius was inside the walls: awed by the mere name of the mighty commander, they broke up their camp and commenced a disorderly retreat, or rather flight, never halting till they reached the city of Membressa on the Bagradas, fifty-one Roman miles south-west from the capital[1]. Here they at length ventured to encamp; and here the terrible Belisarius came up with them, having only 2000 men under his standards, whom by gifts and promises he had persuaded to return to their former loyalty. As Membressa itself was unwalled, neither army dared to occupy it. Belisarius seems to have crossed the Bagradas[2], which is not a rapid though a pretty copious stream, without opposition, and encamped near to its banks. The mutineers, whose army must have been five times as large as his, pitched their camp on an elevated spot, difficult of access. Both commanders, according to classic custom, harangued their men, or at least the Thucydidean historian whom we are following thinks proper to represent them as thus encouraging their troops. Belisarius, while deploring the hard necessity which compelled him to take up arms against the men who had once echoed his own pass-word, declared that they had brought their ruin on themselves by their unholy deeds, and that the devastated fields of Africa, and the corpses

Departure of the rebels.

Belisarius pursues.

Speech of Belisarius.

[1] Equivalent to nearly 47 English miles. Procopius' measurement, 350 stadia, agrees very nearly with the 51 miles of the Antonine Itinerary.

[2] The Bagradas is the modern Medjerdah.

BOOK V. Ch. 2. 536.

of the comrades slain by them, men whose only crime was their loyalty, demanded vengeance. He was persuaded that the newly-raised tyrant Stutza would want that confidence in himself and in the prompt obedience of his troops which alone ensures success. And he ended with a maxim of which his own career was to afford a signal verification: 'It is not by the mass of combatants but by their disciplined courage that victories are won.'

Speech of Stutza.

Stutza enlarged on the ingratitude which, after *they* had undergone the toils of war, had given to idle non-combatants the fruits of victory. After the one gleam of freedom which they had enjoyed during the last few weeks, a return to slavery would be ten times bitterer than their previous condition. If indeed even to live as slaves would be granted them,—but after the dangerous example which they had set, they must expect, if vanquished, to suffer unutterable punishments, perhaps to expire in torment. They could die but once: let them die, if need were, free warriors on that battle-field. Nay, rather, let them conquer, as they must do, a foe so greatly their inferior in numbers, and whose troops in their secret hearts were only longing to share their freedom.

Battle of the Bagradas.

After all this eloquence the battle was hardly a battle. The mutineers, finding that the wind blew strongly in their faces, and fearing that their spears would thus fail to penetrate, endeavoured to make a flank movement, and so to get to windward of the enemy. Belisarius did not give them time to execute this manœuvre, but ordered his men to come to close quarters at once while the mutineers were still in disorder. This unexpected attack threw them into

536. Defeat of the rebels.

utter confusion. They fled in headlong rout, and did not draw bridle till they reached Numidia. The Vandals, less demoralised than the disloyal soldiers, for the most part refused to fly, and died upon the field of battle. Belisarius' army was too small to venture with safety upon a long pursuit, but the camp of the enemy was given up to be plundered by them. They found it richly furnished with gold and silver, the spoil of Carthage; utterly deserted by the men, but full of women, the original abettors of the war, who had now, probably in obedience to the laws of Mars, to contract a third marriage, with their new conquerors.

Return of Belisarius to Sicily.

The rebellion appeared sufficiently crushed to justify Belisarius in returning to Sicily, especially as there was a danger that the example set by the Carthaginian insurgents might be followed by the army stationed there. Accordingly, leaving his son-in-law Ildiger and Theodore of Cappadocia in charge of the African capital, he sailed away to Syracuse.

The interest which the mutiny at Carthage possesses for us consists in the light which it throws on the character of Belisarius, and the ascendency which he exercised over a greedy and licentious soldiery. Its course after he disappears from the scene must be described as briefly as possible.

After-course of the rebellion.

The Roman generals in Numidia, five in number, finding Stutza with his band close to their frontier, marched hastily against him, thinking to crush him before he could re-form his scattered army. He advanced, however, into the space between the hostile ranks, and delivered a short and spirited harangue, the result of which was that the generals found them-

BOOK V. CH. 2. 536.

selves deserted by their troops, who went over in a body to the insurgents. The generals took shelter in a neighbouring church, surrendered on the promise of their lives being spared, and were all slain by Stutza, a man without pity and without faith.

Mission of Germanus.

The mutiny having thus become more formidable than ever, Justinian took a step which he would have done well to take sooner. He sent his nephew, the best of the nobles of the imperial house, the gentle and statesman-like Germanus, with a sufficient supply of treasure to discharge the soldiers' arrears of pay, which had evidently been accumulating for some time; and with instructions to pursue a policy of conciliation towards the insurgents, declaring that the Emperor only desired the good of his brave soldiers, and would severely punish all who had injured them. The man and the policy were so well matched that Germanus, who at first found under the imperial standard only a third of the troops entered on the African muster-rolls, had soon under his command a larger number of soldiers than followed the fortunes of Stutza. The rebels lost heart and fled again into Numidia. A battle ensued at a place called Scalae Veteres[1], the site of which does not appear to have been identified. The fight was desperate and confused. Rebels and loyalists were so like one another in outward appearance, that the troops of Germanus were obliged to be continually asking for the pass-word, in order to distinguish friend from foe. The horse of Germanus was killed under

Battle of Scalae Veteres.

[1] So the translators agree in rendering the *χωρίον ὃ δὴ Καλλασβατάρας καλοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι* of Procopius (De Bell. Vand. ii. 17): but possibly some other name, which might lead to the identification of the site, is concealed under it.

him; but in the end his standards triumphed. Stutza fled: the rebel camp was sacked by the victorious imperialists, who in the fury of plunder refused to listen even to the restraining voice of the general. A squadron of Moors who had been hovering on the outskirts of the battle, the professed allies of the insurgents, but waiting to see which side was favoured by Fortune, now joined the Emperor's forces in a headlong chase of the defeated soldiers.

536 or 537. End of military rebellion.

With the battle of Scalae Veteres the military rebellion was at an end. Stutza with some of the Vandals succeeded in escaping to Mauritania, where he married the daughter of one of the Moorish chiefs. Solomon, who on the departure of Germanus was sent to resume the government of Africa, expelled the Moors from Numidia as well as from the Carthaginian province, and for four years ruled these regions in peace and prosperity. In 543 some acts of ill faith on the part of the Romans roused the hitherto loyal Moors of Tripoli and Tunis into insurrection. The chief, Antalas, long a faithful ally of the Romans, headed the movement: and in one of the first battles of the war, the Eunuch Solomon, deserted by a large body of his troops, who accused him of parsimoniously withholding from them their share of the spoils, fell into the hands of the enemy and was slain. His nephew Sergius, a young man of swaggering demeanour, ignorant of the art of war, unpopular with the generals for his arrogance, with the soldiers for his cowardice and effeminacy, with the provincials for his avarice and lust, was entrusted with the government of the province, which under his sway went rapidly to ruin.

Return of Solomon, 539.

His death, 543.

Sergius governor.

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Reappearance of Stutza, 544.

And now for a brief space Stutza reappeared on the scene, co-operating with Antalas, and labouring not altogether in vain to combine with the Moorish invasion a revival of the old military mutiny. Sergius prosecuted the war with feebleness and ill-success. John the son of Sisinniolus[1], his best subordinate, was so disgusted by the governor's arrogance that he ceased to exert himself in the imperial cause. And after every defeat which Sergius sustained, after every successful siege by the Moors, a number of soldiers joined the standards of Stutza, who doubtless still harangued as volubly as eight years ago on the grievances of the army and the rapacity of the officials.

Appointment of Areobindus, 545.

At length Justinian, though by this time he was heartily weary of his Western conquests and the endless cares in which they involved him, sent a few soldiers and many generals to do their utmost towards finishing the war in Africa. Among the generals was Areobindus, a descendant probably of the great Aspar, all-powerful under Marcian and Leo in the middle of the previous century. He was himself allied to the imperial house, having married Justinian's niece. Under Areobindus, John the son of Sisinniolus was willing to fight, and not only willing but eager. There was only one man in the world whom he hated more than Sergius, and that was the upstart Stutza. The hatred was mutual, and each of these men had been heard to say, that if he could only kill the other he would himself cheerfully expire. The double prayer was, practically, granted. A slender army of the imperialists—for Sergius moodily refused his co-operation—met the Moorish king and the

Battle of Sicca Venerea.

[1] Who is called by Corippus, Joannes Primus.

veteran mutineer on the plain below Sicca Venerea, on the confines of the African and Numidian provinces, about 100 miles south-west of Carthage[1]. Before the battle commenced, John and Stutza, instinct with mutual hatred, rode forth between the two armies to try conclusions with one another in single combat. An arrow from the bow of the imperial general wounded Stutza in the groin. He fell to the earth mortally wounded, but not dead. The mutineers and the army of the Moors swept across the plain, and found him lying under a tree, gasping out the feeble remains of life. Full of rage they dashed on, overpowered the scanty numbers of the imperialists, and turned them to flight. John's horse stumbled as he was galloping down a steep incline: while he was vainly endeavouring to mount, the enemy surrounded and slew him. In a few minutes Stutza died, happy in hearing that his great enemy had fallen. In the first moment of the flight John had said, 'Any death is sweet now, since my prayer that I might slay Stutza has been granted.'

545.

Death of Stutza.

The events of this campaign induced Justinian at last to remove Sergius from the government of Africa and send him to prosecute the war in Italy. After murders, insurrections, changes of ruler which it is not necessary to relate here[2], another John, dis-

Sergius removed from the governorship, 545.

[1] An interesting description of Keff, the modern representative of Sicca Venerea, and a sketch of the rocky eminence on which its citadel stands, is given in Dr. Davis's Carthage and her Remains (London, 1861), pp. 604–614. Sicca played a not unimportant part in the war with Jugurtha. Apparently it is the same place at which Arnobius the Christian apologist kept a school, numbering Lactantius among his pupils.

[2] Areobindus governor 545. Slain by Gontharis, Roman

BOOK V. CH. 2. 546. tinguished as the brother of Pappus, was appointed Magister Militum[1], and sent to govern Africa[2]. Under his administration the province again enjoyed some years of tolerable tranquillity, and the Moors were brought into order and subjection. But from decade to decade, the fine country which had once owned the sway of the Vandals sank deeper into ruin.

general in Numidia. Tyranny of Gontharis. He is slain by Artabanes, after thirty-six days' rule, 545. Artabanes governor 545-546.

[1] There was, however, besides the Magister Militum a special Praefectus Praetorio for Africa, ruling at Carthage. This magistrate was first appointed by Justinian in 534 (Codex i. 27). He seems to have been replaced by an Exarch of Africa towards the end of the sixth century (Bury, ii. 35; Diehl, L'Administration Byzantine, &c., p. 157).

[2] The great number of persons bearing the name of the Apostle John is a confusing element in the history of these times. In the absence of surnames Procopius is very careful to distinguish them by means of their family relationships. We shall have two generals of the name of John to deal with in the Italian campaigns of Belisarius. Meanwhile in the history of these African affairs we distinguish the following bearers of the name:—

I. John the son of Sisinniolus, the enemy of Sergius and the slayer of Stutza.

II. John the brother of Pappus, governor of Africa for some years after 546. He was the hero of the poem of Corippus, and husband (probably) of Justina, niece of Justinian.

III. John the Armenian, brother of Artabanes, slain in the same battle as No. I.

IV. John the usurper (ὁ τύραννος), also called Stutza Junior, whom the soldiers made their leader after the death of Stutza. With a following of 1000 soldiers he joined the usurper Gontharis (545). After the death of Gontharis he took refuge with some Vandals in a church, surrendered to Artabanes on receiving a promise that his life should be spared, and was sent bound to Constantinople (545).

(Procop. de B. V. ii. 28, and Marcellinus Comes, s. a. 547—two years too late.)

Many of the provincials fled to Sicily and the other islands of the Mediterranean[1]. The traveller, in passing through those regions which had once been most thickly peopled, now scarcely met a single wayfarer[2]. Languishing under barbarian inroads, imperial misgovernment, and iniquitous taxation, the country was ripening fast for the time when even Saracen invasion should seem a relief from yet more intolerable evils.

Belisarius sets foot in Italy, 536.

Our rapid survey of events in Africa has carried us fully ten years beyond the point which we have reached in the history of Italy. We go back to Belisarius, landing at Syracuse, on his return voyage from Carthage in April or May 536. The fears which were entertained of a repetition in Sicily of the mutinies of Carthage proved groundless; or, if there had been disaffection, the soldiers at the mere sight of a born ruler like Belisarius at once returned to their accustomed obedience. He was able to administer the best antidote to mutiny, employment. Leaving sufficient garrisons in Syracuse and Palermo, he crossed from Messina to Reggio, and planting his standard on the Italian soil, was daily joined by large numbers of the inhabitants.

The Byzantines in Magna Graecia.

Belisarius was now in Magna Graecia, that region which, in the seventh century before the birth of Christ, was so thickly sown with Hellenic colonies that it seemed another Hellas. Down to the time of the wars of Rome with Pyrrhus and the Tarentines (B. C. 281–272) this Grecian influence had lasted unimpaired. How far it had in the succeeding eight

[1] Procopius, De Bello Vandalico, ii. 23 (i. 512).

[2] Procopius, Anecdota, xviii. (iii. 106).

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centuries been obliterated by the march of Roman legions, by the foundation of Roman colonies, by the formation of the slave-tilled *latifundia* of Roman proprietors, there are perhaps not sufficient materials to enable us to decide. Certainly the Byzantine re-conquest was both easier and more secure in Calabria and Apulia than in any other part of Italy. One cause of this was that there were fewer Goths in the south than in the north. Possibly another cause may have been that still existing remembrances of the golden age of Magna Graecia took the sting out of the taunt, 'They are but Greeklings[1],' which was sometimes applied, not by Goths only, but by Italian provincials, to the invaders from Byzantium. To trace out the remains of this lingering Hellenic feeling, and to distinguish them from the undoubted and considerable influence exerted on Southern Italy by the Greeks of Constantinople from the sixth century to the twelfth, would be an interesting labour; but it is one which lies beyond our present province[2].

Evermud the Goth joins the invaders.

At Reggio Belisarius received an accession to his ranks, which showed the weakness of the national feeling of the Goths. No less a personage than Evermud, the son-in-law of Theodahad, who had been entrusted with a detachment of troops to guard the Straits, came with all his retinue[3] into the Roman

[1] 'Graeculi isti.'

[2] Of course all that is here said about the old and new Hellenism of South Italy applies, with certain modifications, to Sicily also.

[3] Proc. De B. G. i. 8. For the received text ξὺν παισὶ τοῖς ἑπομένοις, the alternative reading ξὺν πᾶσι τ. ἑ., found in Hoeschel's edition, seems to give a better sense. (This is the reading adopted by Comparetti.)

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camp, prostrated himself at the feet of Belisarius, and expressed his desire to be subject to the will of the Emperor[1]. His unpatriotic subserviency was rewarded. He was at once sent to Constantinople, that haven of rest and luxury, which all Romanised Goths languished to behold, and there received the dignity of Patrician and many other rewards from the hand of Justinian.

Advance to Naples.

The Roman army marched on unopposed and supported by the parallel movement of the fleet, through the province of Bruttii and Lucania[2]. They crossed the wide bed of the Silarus; they entered the province of Campania. Still no Gothic army disputed the passage of any river, nor threatened them from any mountain height. At length they reached a strong city by the sea, defended by a large Gothic garrison, the city of Neapolis, the modern Naples. Before this place Belisarius was to tarry many days.

Comparison of ancient and modern Naples.

The modern city of *Naples* is divided into twelve *quartieri*. It is built along a winding and beautifully irregular shore-line, of which it occupies four miles in length, varying in breadth from one mile to two and a-half, according to the nature of the ground. By a recent census it contained about 460,000 inhabitants. The *Neapolis* of the Roman Empire occupied a space only a little overlapping one of the twelve modern *quartieri*, that of S. Lorenzo. It formed an oblong about 1000 yards in length by 800 in breadth. Apparently we have no means of stating

[1] Jordanes (De Reb. Get. lx. and De Reg. Succ. 370) gives the Gothic form of Procopius' Ebrimuth, and supplies a few particulars.

[2] One province, not two, at the time of the Notitia.

its exact population at any period of the Empire; but, if we conjecture it at a twelfth of the population of the modern city, we shall probably be exaggerating rather than depreciating the number of its inhabitants.

It is thus evident that the modern traveller must unclothe himself of many of his remembrances of the existing city of Naples in order to form anything like an accurate idea of the place which Belisarius besieged. It may be well to proceed by the method of rejection, and to indicate the chief points, conspicuous in a modern panorama of Naples, which we must eliminate in order to obtain the true value of the ancient Neapolis. Starting, then, from the western extremity, from Posilippo and the Tomb of Virgil, we come first to the houses which look upon the long drives and shrubberies of the Riviera di Chiaia. We see at a glance that these are modern. They no more belong to the classical, or even the mediaeval, city than the Champs Élysées of the French capital belong to the Lutetia of Julian or the Paris of the Valois kings. But two natural strongholds arrest the eye as we move onwards towards the city: on the right the little fortress-crowned peninsula of Castello dell' Ovo, on the left the frowning ridge of the all-commanding Castle of St. Elmo. With the first we have already made acquaintance. The site of the villa of Lucullus, the luxurious gilded cage of the deposed Augustulus, the shrine of the sainted Severinus, it suggests interesting speculations as to who may have been its occupants when the trumpets of Belisarius sounded before its walls, but it is emphatically no part of the city of Neapolis. Saint Elmo brings vividly before us the differences between ancient and modern warfare.

From the fourteenth century onwards (at least till the most recent changes in the science of gunnery deprived it of its importance) it was emphatically *the* stronghold of Naples. He who held that tyrannous crest of rock virtually held the town. And yet in the wars of the Romans and the Goths this magnificent natural fortress seems to have been absolutely unimportant. The nearest houses of Neapolis were about three-quarters of a mile distant from the base of Saint Elmo, and in those days of catapults and balistae this distance would seem to have been enough to rob even such an eminence of its terrors; otherwise we must surely have heard of its being occupied by Belisarius. We move forwards to the east, still keeping tolerably near the shore. The far-famed Theatre of San Carlo, the Bourbon Palace with its rearing horses in bronze, the massive Castel Nuovo, and the two harbours below it, all these are outside of the ancient city. Outside of it too is the quaint and dingy Largo del Mercato, that most interesting spot to a lover of mediaeval Naples, where market-women chatter and chaffer over the stone once reddened with the blood of Conradin, where a poet's ear might still almost hear the gauntlet of the last of the Swabians ring upon the pavement, summoning his Aragonese kinsman to the age-long contest with the dynasty of Anjou. All this is Naples, but not Neapolis. Where then is the ancient city? Turn back towards the north-west, strike the busy street of the Toledo about a third of the way up on its course from the sea. Here at length we are, not at, but near, the site of the classical city, whose western wall once ran parallel to the Toledo at a distance of about 150 yards to the

Limits of Neapolis.

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right. The Piazza Cavour (Largo delle Pigne) and Strada Carbonara lie a little outside of the northern boundary of Neapolis. Castel Capuano (near the modern railway station) marks its extreme eastern point. The southern wall ran along a little range of higher ground (now nearly levelled with the plain below it), at a distance of some two or three hundred yards from the coast-line, from the Church of the Annunziata to the University. One suburb on the west perhaps once extended about half-way from the western wall of the ancient city to the Toledo, and another on the south may probably have filled up in a similar way the interval between the city and the sea [1].

Traces of the old Roman city.

The block of ground thus indicated once stood out—difficult as it is now to believe it—somewhat abruptly above the surrounding plain [2]. Even now, looking at it on the map, we can trace in it the handiwork of the Roman surveyors. Its three broad 'Decuman' streets running from east to west (Strada Nilo [3], Strada dei Tribunali, and Strada Anticaglia), intersected by twenty-three 'Cardines' running from north to south, still, notwithstanding the alterations made in them to gratify the Neapolitan passion for church building, exhibit an appearance of regularity and rectangularity conspicuously absent in the other part of the city, the haphazard growth of the Middle

[1] Capasso thinks that the sea has not here receded more than a few yards since the days of the Romans.

[2] This seems to be the general opinion of the topographers, yet the measurements given by Beloch (p. 63) of the level at which Roman remains have been found, do not seem to give a depth of more than about twenty feet for the depression north of the city.

[3] With its continuation Strada Biagio and Strada Forcella.

Ages. Roman remains have at various times been discovered under almost the whole of the space denoted above, but nothing is now left for the lover of Roman antiquity to gaze upon save two Corinthian columns of the Temple of the Dioscuri built into the church of S. Paolo Maggiore, and some faint traces of the ancient Theatre lingering in the yards and cellars of the Strada Anticaglia [1].

Likeness of Neapolis to Pompeii.

Fortunately we have an excellent aid to the imagination in endeavouring to bring before the mental vision the Neapolis which Procopius gazed upon. The neighbouring town of Pompeii is very similar in dimensions and shape, and was probably very similar in character [2]. Only we must suppose that nearly five centuries—centuries upon the whole rather of the decay of art than of its development—had passed over the *Tablina* and the *Triclinia* of the buried city to make it correspond with its surviving neighbour. The heathen temples must be imagined to have fallen somewhat into decay, and several Christian basilicas must be allowed to have grown up under their shadow. The fact that the four oldest parish churches in Naples [3]—S. Giovanni Maggiore, Santi Apostoli, S. Giorgio Maggiore, and S. Maria Maggiore—all belong to the district whose confines we have traced, is an interesting confirmation of the truth of its antiquity [4].

[1] Between the Vico di S. Paolo and the Vico dei Giganti.

[2] Pompeii as well as Neapolis seems to have been about 1000 yards long by 800 broad.

[3] The Duomo (dedicated to S. Gennaro), though situated within this district and on the site of the temples of Neptune and Apollo, dates from the period of the Angevin kings.

[4] The alluring pursuit of all enquirers into the earliest history

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Siege operations of Belisarius.

Embassy from the citizens.

Belisarius stationed his fleet in the harbour, where they were beyond the range of the projectiles of the enemy. A Gothic garrison stationed in 'the suburb' (possibly the suburb between the city and the sea) at once surrendered to the invaders. Then a message was sent to the Roman general asking him if he would consent to receive a deputation of some of the principal inhabitants of the city, anxious to confer with him for the public welfare. He consented, and the deputation, with one Stephanus at its head, appeared before him. Stephanus pleaded the hard case of the Roman citizens of Naples, summoned by a Roman army to surrender their town, and prevented from doing so by a Gothic garrison. Nor were even these Gothic soldiers free agents. Their wives and children were in the hands of Theodahad, who would assuredly visit upon them any fault which the garrison might commit towards him. In these cruel circumstances the citizens begged Belisarius not to press upon them his summons to surrender. After all, it was not there, but under the walls of Rome, that the

Speech of Stephanus.

of Neapolis is the attempt to fix the site of Palaepolis, the elder sister of that city, like her founded from Cumae, but ultimately absorbed in or obliterated by the greatness of her younger rival. Many Neapolitan archaeologists fix Palaepolis on the east of the other city. Niebuhr, with a somewhat amusing positiveness, fixes it far to the west, near Posilippo. S. Capasso contends for a nearer position on the south-west, at the Castel Nuovo and on the site of the present Palazzo Reale. Beloch argues that there never was such a city as Palaepolis, and that the mention of it is due to a misunderstanding of the word Palaepolitani—the old citizens of Neapolis as opposed to some new settlers. But in the face of Livy's clear statement (viii. 22) as to the situation of the two cities, and the record in the Triumphal Fasti of the victory of Publilius over the 'Samnites Palaeopolitanei,' this seems too bold a stroke of historical scepticism.

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decisive engagement would have to be fought. If Rome were reduced to the Emperor's obedience, Neapolis must inevitably follow its example. If the general were repulsed from Rome, the possession of a little city like Neapolis would avail him nothing.

Reply of Belisarius.

Belisarius coldly thanked the orator for his advice as to the course of the campaign, but announced his intention of conducting the war according to his own notions of military expediency. To the Roman inhabitants he offered the choice of freedom to be achieved by his arms; or slavery, they themselves fighting to keep the yoke upon their necks. He could hardly doubt what in such circumstances their choice would be, especially as the prosperous condition of the loyal Sicilians showed that he was both able and willing to keep the promises which he made in the name of the Emperor. Even to the Goths he could offer honourable terms. Let them either enter his army and become the servants of the great Monarch whom the civilised world obeyed, or, if they refused this proposal, on the surrender of the city they should march out unharmed (it is to be presumed with the honours of war), and depart whither they would.

Debates in the city.

Stephanus, whose patriotism had been quickened by the promise of large rewards to himself if he could bring about the surrender of the city, strove earnestly to induce his fellow-citizens to accept the terms of Belisarius. He was seconded in these efforts by a Syrian merchant named Antiochus, long resident in Neapolis, a man of great wealth and high reputation. Two orators however, named Pastor and Asclepiodotus, also men of great influence in the city, stood forth as the advocates of an opposite policy, one of

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loyalty to the Goths and resistance to Byzantium. If we are perplexed at finding professed rhetoricians and men of letters (one of whom bears a Greek name) championing the cause of the barbarians, we may remember the life-long loyalty of Cassiodorus to the house of Theodoric, and may conjecture that other men of like training to his had been induced to enter the Gothic service. Some of these, like the two rhetoricians now before us, may have had statesmanship enough to see that the so-called 'Roman liberty' which was offered to the Italians would mean only a change of masters, and that change not necessarily one for the better.

Belisarius accepts the offered terms of capitulation.

By the advice of Pastor and Asclepiodotus, the demands of the Neapolitans were raised so high that in their opinion Belisarius would never grant them. A memorandum containing these demands was presented by Stephanus to the General, who accepted them and confirmed his acceptance by an oath. On the news of this favourable reply the pressure in favour of surrender became so strong that the Gothic garrison alone would not have ventured to resist it. The common people had begun to stream down towards the gates with the intention of opening them: but then the two orators 'whose sentence was for open war' gathered the Goths and the principal Neapolitans together and again harangued them in support of their views: 'The mob have taken this thought of surrender into their minds and are eager to execute it[1]. But

Pastor and Asclepiodotus

[1] From this and other passages there seems some reason to conclude that the aristocratic party at Naples were at this time in favour of the Gothic dominion, the democracy in favour of the Byzantine.

we, who deem that they are rushing headlong to ruin, are bound to consult you, the leaders of the state, and to put our thoughts before you, the last contribution that we can make to the welfare of our country. You think that, because you have the promise and the oath of Belisarius, you are now relieved from all further danger of the horrors of war. And if that were so, we should be the first to advise you to surrender. But how can Belisarius guarantee your future security? He is going to fight the nation of the Goths under the walls of Rome. Suppose that he does not gain the victory: you will have the Gothic warriors in a few days before your gates breathing vengeance against the cowardly betrayers of their trust. And on the other hand, if he wins, even on that most favourable supposition you will have to make up your minds to the permanent presence of an imperial garrison in your town. For the Emperor, though he may be much obliged to you for the moment for removing an obstacle out of his path, will not fail to make a note of the fact that the Neapolitans are a fickle and disloyal people, not safe to be trusted with the defence of their city. No: depend upon it, you will stand better both with friends and foes if you do not lightly surrender the trust committed to your hands. Belisarius cannot take the city: the magnitude of the promises which he makes to you is the plainest proof of that. You have strong walls and an abundant supply of provisions. Only stand firm for a few days and you will see the cloud of war roll away from your borders.' With this the orators brought forward some Jews to vouch for the fact that Neapolis was well provisioned for a siege. The Israelite nation were always

strongly oppose the surrender.

Jewish loyalty to the Goths.

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in favour of the tolerant rule of Theodoric and his successors as against the narrow bigotry of Byzantium. Apparently, in this instance, they were able to speak with authority, being the merchants by whose aid the needful stores of provision had been procured. The result of the harangue of the two orators, backed by the assurances of the Hebrews, was that the party of surrender was outvoted, and Belisarius, sorely vexed at the delay, but unwilling to leave so strong a place untaken in his rear, had to set about the siege of Neapolis.

Negotiations for surrender broken off.

Appeal to Theodahad.

The citizens, having resolved on a stubborn defence, appealed, as they had abundant right to do, to Theodahad for assistance. That miserable prince, utterly unready for war, seems to have allowed the precious winter months to slip by without making any preparations of importance, and was now seeking to diviners and soothsayers for knowledge as to that future which he had done nothing to mould. His classical reading might have made him familiar with the well-known saying of Hector,—

Εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος, ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης[1].

Theodahad resorts to the diviners.

But instead of this robust determination to conquer Fortune, the dreamy mysticism of his own Etruria, intent for centuries on poring over the page of futurity, swayed the nerveless spirit of Theodahad. The manner of divination, concerted between him and a Jewish magician, was ridiculous enough to have been practised by any Roman augur. Thirty hogs, divided into three batches of ten each, were shut up in three separate pens. One was labelled 'Troops of the Emperor,'

Omen of the hogs.

[1] 'No better omen than his own right hand
Inspires the warrior for his native land.'

another 'Goths,' and the last 'Romans.' The unfortunate animals were then left for a certain number of days without food. When the pens were opened, it was found that the Gothic hogs had all perished save two, that of the Roman animals half had died and the remaining half had lost all their bristles, while the Imperialists were nearly all alive. The inference was obvious. The Gothic race was doomed to almost utter extermination; the provincials of Italy should suffer cruel hardships and the loss of all their property, but half of the nation should survive the war; while the Byzantine invaders alone should emerge from it fat and flourishing. After this augury of the hogs, Theodahad felt himself even less prepared than before to send effectual succour to the Neapolitans.

Vigorous resistance of the Neapolitans.

The citizens, however, were making so good a defence that it seemed as if they might be able to do without reinforcements. The steepness of the approaches to the walls, the narrow space between them and the sea, which left no room for the evolutions of troops, and possibly some defect in the harbourage which made it difficult for the ships to approach near enough to hurl projectiles into the city, all made the task of Belisarius one of unusual difficulty. He had cut off the aqueduct which brought water from Serino, in the valley of the Samnite river Sabatus, into Neapolis; but there were so many excellent wells within the enclosure that the inhabitants scarcely perceived any diminution of their water-supply. As day passed on after day and still no breach was made in the walls, and many of his bravest soldiers were falling in the useless assaults, Belisarius, chafing at the delay, began bitterly to repent that he had ever undertaken the siege. It

Discouragement of Belisarius.

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was still perhaps only June[1], but twenty days of the siege had already elapsed, and at this rate it would be winter before he met Theodahad and the great Gothic host under the walls of Rome.

The Isaurian in the aqueduct.

At this crisis, when he was on the point of giving the order to the soldiers to collect their baggage and raise the siege, one of his body-guard, an Isaurian named Paucaris, brought him tidings which gave him a gleam of hope. One of his fellow-countrymen, a private soldier, clambering, as these Isaurian mountaineers were in the habit of doing, up every steep place that they could scale, had come to the end of the broken aqueduct. Curious to see the *specus* or channel along which the water had once flowed, he had entered through the aperture, which had been imperfectly closed by the defenders of the city, and crept for some distance along the now waterless conduit. At length he came to a part of its course where it was taken through the solid rock, and here, to save labour, the diameter of the *specus* was smaller, too small for a man in armour to creep through it. Yet he deemed that the hole might be widened sufficiently to remove this difficulty, and that it would then be possible to penetrate by this forgotten passage into the city itself. Belisarius at once perceived the importance of the discovery, and sent some Isaurians, with the utmost secrecy, under the guidance of their countryman to accomplish the desired excavation.

[1] Procopius' indications of time are not very clear at this point, but I conjecture that the siege of Neapolis may have occupied the last twenty days of June, perhaps reaching on into July. The deposition of Theodahad, which was its immediate result, occurred in August.

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The aqueduct made practicable.

They used no axe or hammer, that they might not alarm the enemy. Patiently, with sharp instruments of steel they filed away at the rock, and at length returned to the General, announcing that there was now a practicable passage through the aqueduct.

Belisarius gives the citizens another chance of surrender.

But before attempting by this means the assault of the city, Belisarius determined to make one more effort to persuade the inhabitants to surrender. Sending for Stephanus, he said to him (in words which remind us of a well-known utterance of our own Duke of Wellington), 'Many are now the cities that I have seen taken, and I am perfectly familiar with all that goes on at such a time,—the grown men slain with the edge of the sword; the women suffering the last extremity of outrage, longing for death but unable to find one friendly destroyer; the children driven off into bondage, doomed to sink from an honourable condition into that of half-fed and ignorant boors, slaves of the very men whose hands are red with the blood of their parents: and besides all this, the leaping flames destroying in an hour all the comeliness of the city. I can see as in a mirror, my dear Stephanus, your fair city of Neapolis undergoing all these horrors which I have beheld in so many of the towns that I have taken; and my whole soul is stirred with pity for her and her inhabitants. She is a city of old renown. They are Romans and Christians, and I have many barbarians in my army, hard to restrain at any time, and now maddened by the loss of brethren and comrades who have fallen in the siege. I will tell you honestly that you cannot escape me. The plans which I have made are such that the city *must* fall into my hands. Be advised by me, and accept an

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The citizens will not accept it.

honourable capitulation while you can. If you refuse, blame not Fortune, but your own perversity for all the miseries that shall come upon you.' With tears and lamentations Stephanus delivered to his fellow-citizens the message of Belisarius; but they, confident in the impregnability of their city, still abjured every thought of surrender.

Preparations for the assault.

As there was no possibility of avoiding the assault, Belisarius proceeded to make his plans for it as perfect as possible. At twilight he chose out four hundred men whom he placed under the command of Magnus, a cavalry officer, and Ennes, a leader of the Isaurians. Though we are not expressly told that it was so, there seems some reason to suppose that the half of this force commanded by Ennes was itself of Isaurian nationality; and no doubt both Paucaris and the original discoverer of the passage took part in the expedition. The men were fully armed with shield, breastplate, and sword, and two trumpeters went with them. The whole secret of the plan was then disclosed to Magnus and Ennes; the spot was indicated where they were to enter the aqueduct, and from whence with lighted torches they and their four hundred were to creep stealthily into the city. Meanwhile the Roman host was kept under arms ready for action, and the carpenters were set to work preparing ladders for the assault.

Some of the exploring party turn faint-hearted.

At first the General had to endure a disappointment. Fully one half of the aqueduct party—the non-Isaurian half if our conjecture be correct—when they had crept for some distance through the dark channel, declared that the deed was too dangerous, and marched back to the entrance, the reluctant and mortified Magnus at

their head. Belisarius, who was still standing there surrounded by some of the bravest men in the army, had no difficulty in at once selecting two hundred volunteers to take the place of the recreants; and his gallant step-son Photius, claiming to be allowed to head the expedition, leapt eagerly into the aqueduct. The General thought of Antonina, and forbade her son to venture through the channel; but the example of his bravery and the bitter taunts of Belisarius so stung the waverers, that they too returned into the aqueduct, thus apparently raising the numbers of the storming party to six hundred.

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536.

Others volunteer.

All go forward.

Fearing that so large a detachment might make some noise which would be heard by the Gothic sentinels, the General ordered his lieutenant Bessas to draw near to the walls and engage their attention. Bessas harangued them accordingly in his and their native tongue, enlarging on the rich rewards of the imperial service, and advising them to enter it without delay. They replied with taunts and insults; but the object was gained. In the storm of the debate, amid all the crash of Teutonic gutturals, any muffled sounds from the region of the aqueduct passed unheeded.

Bessas engages the attention of the garrison.

The storming party were now within the circuit of the walls of Neapolis, but they found themselves penetrating further than they wished; and how to emerge into the city was as yet by no means apparent. A lofty vaulted roof of brick was over their heads. They seem to have been standing in what would have been a great reservoir had the aqueduct been still flowing. Despair seized the heart of those who had already entered the place, and the column of soldiers still pressing on from behind made their situation each

Exit from the aqueduct.

BOOK V. CH. 2. 536.

moment more perilous. At length those in front saw a break in the vaulting above them, by the break the outlines of a cottage, by the cottage an olive-tree. It was hopeless for armed soldiers to climb up that steep reservoir-side; but one brave fellow, an Isaurian doubtless, laid aside helmet and shield, and with hands and feet scrambled up the wall. In the cottage he found one old woman in a state of abject poverty. He threatened her with death if she stirred or shrieked. She was mute. He fastened a strong strap which he had brought with him to the stem of the olive-tree. His comrades grasped the other end, and one by one all the six hundred mounted without accident.

The aqueduct party signal to their comrades.

By this time the fourth watch of the night had begun. The storming party rushed to the northern ramparts, beneath which they knew that Belisarius and Bessas would be stationed, slew two of the sentinels who were taken unawares, and then blew a long blast on their bugles. At once the Byzantine soldiers placed the ladders against the walls and began to mount. Destruction! The ladders, which had been hurriedly made in the darkness by the army-carpenters, were too short, and did not reach to the foot of the battlements. They were taken down again, and two of them were hastily but securely fastened together. Now the soldiers could mount. They poured over the battlements. On the north side at any rate the city was won.

On the south, between the sea and the wall, the task of the assailants was somewhat harder. There, not the Goths, but the Jews kept watch; the Jews ever embittered against the persecuting Government of Constantinople, and now fighting with the courage

of despair, since they knew that the part which they had taken in opposing the surrender had marked them out for vengeance. But when day dawned, and they were attacked in their rear by assailants from the other part of the city, even the Jews were obliged to flee, and the southern gates were opened to the Byzantines.

The city taken.

The besiegers on the east side, where no serious assault had been contemplated, had no scaling ladders, and were obliged to burn the gates of the city before they could effect an entrance. By this time the whole troop of semi-barbarians called the Roman army was pouring through the town, murdering, ravishing, plundering, binding for slavery, even as Belisarius had prophetically described. The Huns who were serving under the banners of the Empire, and who were no doubt still heathens, did not respect even the sanctity of the churches, but slew those who had taken refuge at the altars.

Belisarius exhorts his soldiers to be merciful.

Then Belisarius collected his troops together, probably in the great Forum of the city, and delivered a harangue in which he besought them not to tarnish the victory which God had given them by unholy deeds. The Neapolitans were now no longer enemies, but fellow-subjects: let them not sow the seeds of irreconcilable hatred by a bloody butchery in the first city which they had taken. With these words, and with the assurance that all the wealth which they could lay hands upon should be theirs, as the fitting reward of their valour, he persuaded the soldiers to sheathe their swords, and even to unbind their captives and restore wives to their husbands, children to their parents. Thus, says the historian, did the Neapolitans—those at least of them who escaped the massacre—pass

BOOK V. CH. 2. 536. in a few hours from freedom to slavery, and back again from slavery to freedom, and even to a certain measure of comfort. For they had succeeded in burying their gold and all their most precious property; and after the storm of war had passed they were able to recover it.

The Gothic prisoners. Eight hundred Gothic warriors were taken prisoners in the city. Belisarius protected them from outrage at the hands of his soldiery and kept them in honourable captivity, treating them in all respects like soldiers of his own.

Fate of Pastor. The unhappy leaders of the war-party attested by their end the sincerity of their advice. Pastor, who was previously in perfect health, when he saw that the city was taken, received so violent a shock that he had a stroke of apoplexy which proved immediately fatal. Asclepiodotus with some of the nobles of the city presented himself boldly before Belisarius. Stephanus, in his grief at the calamities which had befallen his native city, assailed with bitter reproaches 'that betrayer of his country, that wickedest of men, who had sold his city in order to curry favour with the Goths. Had the cause of the barbarians triumphed, Asclepiodotus would have denounced the patriots as traitors and hounded them to the death. Only the valour of Belisarius had delivered them from this calamity.' With some dignity Asclepiodotus replied that the invective of Stephanus was really his highest praise, since it showed that *he* had been firm in his duty to those whom he found set over him. Now that by the fortune of war Neapolis had passed under the power of the Emperor, Asclepiodotus would be found as faithful a servant of the Empire as he had been of the Goths, while Stephanus at the first whisper of

Violent reproaches of Stephanus.

ill-fortune would be found veering back again from his new to his old allegiance. BOOK V. CH. 2.

We are not told what part Belisarius took in this quarrel. The populace followed Asclepiodotus on his departure from the general's tent, assailed him with reproaches as author of all their miseries, and at length slew him and mangled his remains. Then seeking the house of Pastor, they would not for a long time believe his slaves who assured them of his death. Satisfied at last by the sight of his dead body, they dragged it forth from the city and hung it ignominiously on a gibbet. They then repaired to the quarters of Belisarius, told him what they had done, and craved pardon for the display of their righteous indignation, a pardon which was readily granted. 536. Death of Asclepiodotus.

So ended the Byzantine siege of Naples. The only remembrance of it which, in the changed circumstances of the city, a modern traveller can obtain, is furnished by a few red arches which, under the name of Ponti Rossi, traverse one of the roads leading north-eastwards from the city, a little below the royal palace of Capo di Monte. At this point apparently the aqueduct which led into the city of Naples branched off from the main line which held on its course westwards to Puteoli and Baiae. Over these arches marched the hardy Isaurians on that perilous midnight adventure which resulted in the capture of Neapolis [1].

[1] Lord Stanhope (Life of Belisarius, p. 180), following Muratori, says that it was through this same aqueduct that Alfonso of Arragon entered the city in 1442. But this, I am informed by S. Capasso, is an error. The aqueduct through which the Spaniards entered the city was called 'della Bolla.' It brought water from Somma under Mount Vesuvius, and entered the city through the eastern, not the northern wall.

BOOK V. CH. 3.

CHAPTER III.

THE ELEVATION OF WITIGIS.

Authorities.

Sources:—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, i. 11–13. CASSIODORUS, Variarum, x. 31–35. JORDANES, De Regnorum Successione, 372–3; De Rebus Geticis, 309–10.

536. Indignation of the Goths against Theodahad.

THE failure of the Gothic King to avert the fall of Neapolis exasperated beyond endurance the warlike subjects of Theodahad. His avarice and his ingratitude were known; his want of loyalty to the nation of his fathers was more than suspected. Rumours of his negotiations with Constantinople, even the most secret and the most discreditable of them, had reached the ears of his subjects, and now the worst of those rumours seemed to be confirmed by his desertion of the defenders of Neapolis, a desertion so extraordinary that mere incompetence seemed insufficient to account for it.

Assembly of the nation under arms at Regeta, Aug. 536[1].

That which our ancestors would have called a Folc-mote, an assembly of the whole Gothic nation under arms, was convened, by what authority we know not, to deliberate on the perilous condition of the country.

[1] We get the date of the deposition of Theodahad from the Liber Pontificalis (Vita Silverii), which states that it occurred two months after the election of Pope Silverius.

The place of meeting was forty-three miles[1] from Rome. It has been hitherto impossible to discover any clue to the name given by Procopius, who says 'The Romans call the place Regeta;' but the other indications afforded by him show that it was situated in the Pomptine Marshes, and in that part of them which the draining operations of Decius, who had apparently cleared out the old Decennovial[2] Canal, had restored to productiveness, perhaps even to fertility[3].

Allusion has already been made to Theodoric's share in the promotion of this useful work, and to the palace bearing his name which crowned the heights of Terracina[4]. If not that palace itself, yet at any rate the hill on which it stood, rose conspicuously on the southern horizon some fifteen miles from the Gothic meeting-place. The reason for choosing this spot was that, thanks to the draining operations just referred to, the vast plain furnished a plentiful supply of grass for the horses of the assembled warriors[5].

[1] English miles: forty-seven Roman: see Procopius, De B. G. i. 11. This passage is very important for the information which it affords as to the length of Procopius' stadium, which was evidently 272 yards, 70 yards longer than the stadium of Attic historians. Procopius says, in explaining the Latin word Decennovium: Ποταμὸς . . . *ἐννεακαίδεκα περιιὼν σημεῖα, ὅπερ ξύνεισιν ἐς τρεῖς καὶ δέκα καὶ ἑκατὸν σταδίους.* Since 113 stadia = 19 Roman miles (of 1618 yards each) = 30,742 yards, it follows that one stadium = $272\frac{6}{113}$ yards.

[2] The Decennovial Canal derived its name from the fact that it flowed past nineteen miles of the Appian Way.

[3] See Abstract of the letters of Cassiodorus, ii. 32, for Theodoric's 'concession' to Decius.

[4] See vol. iii. p. 277.

[5] Scholars seem to have given up in despair the attempt to identify Regeta. Lord Stanhope suggests Lake Regillus, which is absurd, neither the distance nor any of the other indications

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536.

Deposition of Theodahad.

As soon as the nation met upon the plain of Regeta, it was clear that the deposition of Theodahad was inevitable, and that the only question was who should succeed him. The line of the great Theodoric was practically extinct (only a young girl, the sister of Athalaric, remained); and in the great necessity of the nation, they travelled beyond the circle not only of royal, but even of noble blood, to find a deliverer.

Election of Witigis.

A warrior named Witigis, not sprung from any illustrious house [1], but who had rendered himself illustrious by great deeds wrought against the Gepids in the war of Sirmium [2], was raised upon the buckler and acclaimed as king [3]. The pen of the veteran Cassiodorus was employed to draw up the document in which was announced to the Goths the elevation of a king, 'not chosen in the recesses of a royal bedchamber, but in

furnished by Procopius agreeing therewith. The neighbourhood of Terracina and of the Decennovian Canal is clearly pointed out by Procopius. He seems, however, not to be aware that the stream in question was not a natural river. Is it possible that *Regeta* is an error for *Regesta*, and has something to do with the dykes or embankments of the Decian drainage-scheme? It seems to me that the site should be looked for pretty near *Ad Medias* (Mesa Posta), the station on the Appian Way between Appii Forum and Terracina. Procopius here displays a little archæological learning about the Homeric island of Circe in connection with Terracina and the neighbouring promontory of Circaeum.

[1] Οὐίτιγιν εἵλοντο, ἄνδρα οἰκίας οὐκ ἐπιφανοῦς ὄντα.

[2] See vol. iii. p. 396.

[3] The account given by Jordanes (De Regnorum Successione, 372) makes the elevation of Witigis more the result of his own contrivance and less the spontaneous act of the nation than that of Procopius. 'Vitiges . . . qui Campania[m] ingressus mox ad campos venisset Barbaricos, ilico exercitus favore, quod contra Theodahadum suspectum habebat excepit. . . . Facto impetu in eo consona voce Vitigis [Vitigem] regem denuntiant. At ille regno levatus *quod ipse optaverat* mox populi voto consentit,' etc.

the expanse of the boundless Campagna; of one who owed his dignity first to Divine grace, but secondly to the free judgment of the people; of one who knew the brave men in his army by comradeship, having stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the day of battle.' His countrymen were exhorted to relinquish that attitude of fear and mutual suspicion which the rule of the craven Theodahad had only too naturally produced, and to work with one accord for the deliverance of their nation.

Death of Theodahad.

Witigis decided without hesitation that the dethroned monarch must die. He gave the word to a Goth named Optaris to follow Theodahad and bring him back, dead or alive. Optaris had the stimulus of revenge besides that of obedience to urge him to fulfil his bloody commission, since he had lost a bride rich and lovely, whose hand had been plighted to him, by Theodahad's venal interference on behalf of a rival suitor. Night and day he spurred on his steed. He came up with the flying King before he had reached Ravenna, threw him to the ground, and cut his throat as a priest would slay a sheep for sacrifice[1].

[1] Agnellus (Lib. Pont. Ecclesiae Ravennatis, § 62) says of Theodahad, whom he calls Deodatus, 'Non post multos dies ivit rex Deodatus Romam, et revertente (*sic*) occisus est a Gothis 15 miliario de Ravenna, mense Decembris.' Either

(1) This date is wrong, which one does not like to admit, as Agnellus is generally accurate in his indication as to the time of year when events happened, though often wrong as to the year itself;

Or (2) the date assigned, on the authority of the Roman Liber Pontificalis, to the deposition of Theodahad (August 536) is wrong;

Or (3) the interval between Theodahad's deposition and death was longer than the narrative of Procopius would lead us to infer. I incline to the last supposition. Perhaps there was really a short

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So vanishes the Platonist Ostrogoth, the remover of land-marks, the perjurer and the coward, from the page of history. It is not often that the historian has to describe a character so thoroughly contemptible as that of Theodahad.

Deplorable state of the Gothic monarchy.

Witigis on his accession to the throne found an utter absence of effective preparation to meet the enemy. The two enemies, we should rather say, since the Franks, in fulfilment of a secret compact with Justinian, were in arms against the Goths, and a considerable part of the army of Theodahad was stationed in Provence and Dauphiné, endeavouring to defend that part of the kingdom against the sons of Clovis.

Witigis proposes to leave Rome.

In these circumstances Witigis determined to retire for a time to Ravenna, not indeed evacuating Rome, since the gallant veteran Leudaris was to be left in charge of that city with 4000 picked troops, but withdrawing the bulk of his army to the stronger capital, and there at his leisure preparing for the defence of the kingdom. In a speech to the army he set forth the reasons for this course, the necessity for getting the Frankish war off their hands and so of reducing the number of their invaders, the difference between a withdrawal dictated by motives of high policy and a cowardly flight, and so forth. The most important point of all, the effect of such a movement on the Roman population, was thus slightly handled: 'If the Romans be well affected towards us, they will help to guard the city for the Goths, and will not put Fortune to the proof, knowing that we shall speedily return. But if they are meditating any intrigue against us,

civil war between the partisans and the enemies of Theodahad: or possibly he was in hiding from August to December.

they will do us less harm by delivering the city to the enemy than by continuing in secret conspiracy; for we shall then know who are on our side, and shall be able to distinguish friends from foes.' BOOK V. CH. 3. 536.

With these and similar arguments Witigis persuaded his countrymen to retire with the bulk of the army into North Italy. It is easy to see now, and surely it should have been easy to see then, that this was a fatal blunder. The Franks, as the events of the next few months were to prove, were fighting only for their own hand, and might easily be bought off by territorial concessions in Gaul. The real and only inevitable enemy was Belisarius, the daring strategist who was now at Neapolis, and who had come to the Italian peninsula to conquer it, the whole of it, for his master or to die. All-important in this struggle was the attitude of the Roman population, not in Rome only, but over the whole of Italy. They could still look back on the peace and plenty which had marked the just reign of Theodoric. Though by no means welded into one nation with their Gothic guests, there was not as yet, we have good reason to believe, any impassable chasm between the two races; and if they could be persuaded to cast in their lot with the Teutonic defenders of their land, if they could practise the lesson which they had been lately learning, of substituting the name 'Italy' for 'the Empire'; above all, if they could be induced to think of Belisarius and his troops as Greek intruders into their country, the new Romano-Gothic people and fatherland might yet be formed. The example of the resistance of Neapolis showed that this was not a mere idle dream. But all these hopes would be blasted, all the great work of

Error of this course.

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Theodoric and Cassiodorus would be unravelled, and the Ostrogoths would sink into the position of a mere countryless horde, themselves invaders of Italy rather than the invaded, if the general of Justinian could once get within the walls of Rome, if the name of that venerable city with its thirteen centuries of glory could once be his to conjure with, if the head and the members being again joined together he could display himself to the world as the defender of the Roman Empire, in Rome, against the barbarians.

Departure of the Gothic host to Ravenna, leaving a small garrison in Rome.

The chance, if chance there was, of so defending the Gothic kingdom was thrown away. The unwise counsel of Witigis—who, it may be, could not believe himself a king till he had actually sat in Theodoric's audience-chamber at Ravenna—prevailed, and the Gothic host marched off northwards, leaving only Leudaris and his 4000 braves to hold the capital against Belisarius. Witigis took, indeed, some precautions, such as they were, to assure the fidelity of the citizens. He harangued Pope Silverius, the Senate, and the people of Rome, calling to their remembrance the great benefits which they had received from Theodoric; he bound them under most solemn oaths to be faithful to the Gothic rule; he took a large number of Senators with him as hostages for the loyalty of the rest. To force the subjects whom he was not defending to swear eternal allegiance to his rule was the work of a weak man; to hint that, if they did not, their innocent friends should suffer for it, was the threat of a cruel one. This taking of hostages, though it might seem for the moment an easy expedient for securing the fidelity of an unguarded city, was essentially a bad security. If the bond were forfeited by the surrender

of the city, to exact the penalty, namely, the death of the chief citizens of Rome, helpless and innocent, was to put an absolutely impassable barrier of hate between the Gothic King and the vast majority of the inhabitants of Italy.

Witigis marries Matasuentha.

On his arrival at Ravenna Witigis took part in a pageant which may have both amazed and amused his Gothic subjects. He, the elderly warrior, the husband of a wife probably of his own age, having divorced that companion of his humbler fortunes, proceeded to marry the young and blooming Matasuentha, sister of Athalaric and granddaughter of the great Theodoric. Reasons of state were of course alleged for these strange nuptials. An alliance with the royal house might cause men to forget the lowliness of the new King's origin; and the danger of his finding a rival to the crown in Matasuentha's husband, or even of her making over her rights, such as they might be, to the Emperor, was barred by her becoming the Lady of the Goths. But the marriage was against nature, and brought no blessing with it. The unfortunate girl, as weary of her elderly husband as Athalaric had been of his grey-headed tutors, chafed against the yoke, and made no secret of the fact that she loved not her consort; and he, divided between the pride of the low-born adventurer exalted to a splendid position, and the unhappiness of the husband who is unloved and who lives in an atmosphere of daily reproaches, lost any power which he may ever have possessed of devising measures for the deliverance of the Gothic nation from its peril [1].

[1] All our authorities agree as to the unhappiness of this marriage. Procopius says (De B. G. i. 11): Ματασοῦνθαν . . . παρθένον τε καὶ

BOOK V. CH. 3. 536. The elevation of Witigis a mistake.

Altogether, the elevation of Witigis was a mistake for the Gothic monarchy. It was the old and often-repeated error of supposing that because a man till he has reached middle life has played a subordinate part with some credit, he will be able to rise to the sudden requirements of a great and difficult position; that respectability will serve instead of genius. Against a general, perhaps the greatest that the world has ever seen for fertility of resource and power of rapid combination, the Goths had given themselves for a leader a mere brave and honest blunderer, whose notions of strategy were like those which Demosthenes reproved in his Athenian countrymen, who, as unskilful pugilists, were always trying to parry a blow after it had been struck and always being surprised by its successor. Yet as, with all his incapacity, he was loyal to the nation, the nation was loyal to him, and during the three following years of his disastrous leadership they never seem to have entertained the thought of replacing him by a better commander[1].

Embassy to Constantinople.

Having now allied himself with the daughter of the murdered Amalasuntha, Witigis sent an embassy to

ὡραίαν ἤδη οὖσαν, γυναῖκα γαμετὴν οὔ τι ἐθελούσιον ἐποιήσατο. Jordanes (De Regnorum Successione, 373): 'Regnoque suo confirmans, expeditionem solvit et privata conjuge repudiata regiam puellam Mathesuentam Theodorici regis neptem sibi plus vi copolat quam amori.' The same words are used by Marcellinus Comes, from whom possibly Jordanes has borrowed them.

[1] There is something in this attitude of the Goths towards Witigis which reminds one of the French confidence in General Trochu during the siege of Paris. But this comparison is probably unfair to Trochu. Victory over the Germans was scarcely possible when the French general took the command in September 1870. Victory over the Byzantines was abundantly possible for the Gothic King in 536.

Constantinople, urging, with some reason, that the cause of quarrel between the Emperor and the Goths was at an end. The vile Theodahad had paid the penalty of his crimes, a penalty which Witigis himself had exacted from him. The daughter of Amalasuntha sat on the Gothic throne. What more did Justinian require? Why should he not stop the effusion of blood and restore peace to Italy? This letter to the Emperor was supplemented by one to the orthodox bishops of Italy, calling upon them to pray for the success of the embassy; to the Prefect of Thessalonica, praying him to speed the two ambassadors on their way; and to the Master of the Offices at Constantinople, beseeching him to use his influence in favour of peace. All these letters came from the pen of Cassiodorus [1].

Presumed answer of Justinian.

The letters written in reply to Witigis have not been preserved; but there can be no doubt that such letters were received by the Gothic king, probably in the late autumn of 536, and they must have been to the intent that the war must now proceed, since nothing but unqualified submission would satisfy the demand of Justinian.

Gaulish possessions ceded to the Franks.

One of the first acts of the reign of Witigis was to buy off the opposition of the Franks by the cession of the Ostrogothic possessions in Gaul (Provence and part of Dauphiné) [2] and by the payment of twenty

[1] See Cassiodori Variarum, x. 32–35. It is not quite clear whether Witigis is addressing his own or Justinian's *Magister Officiorum*: but I think the latter.

[2] At this time also, as v. Schubert thinks (Unterwerfung der Alamannen, p. 178) the remnant of the Alamannic nation which had lived in Raetia under the protection of the Ostrogothic kings, was handed over by Witigis to Theudebert.

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hundredweight of gold (£80,000)[1]. Negotiations for this purpose had been commenced by Theodahad, but were interrupted by his death. Childebert, Theudebert, and Chlotochar now divided among them the treasure and the towns ceded by the Goths, and concluded a secret alliance with them, promising to send some of their horde of subject nations to assist in the defence of Italy. More they durst not do, being desirous still to keep up the appearance of friendship with Byzantium.

In thus resuming the pacific policy of Theodahad towards the Franks,—a policy which enabled him to recall the general Marcias and many thousands of the bravest of the Goths to the south of the Alps,—Witigis seems to have been only recognising an inevitable necessity. His great error was in not making this concession earlier. If he could thus purchase the friendship of the Franks, and secure his northern frontier from their attacks, he ought to have done so at once, and thus to have avoided the necessity for the fatal abandonment of Rome.

[1] In the wild legend which figures as the story of Amalasuntha in the pages of Gregory of Tours (Hist. Franc. iii. 31), this payment, reduced to 50,000 *aurei* (£30,000), is represented as the *wergild* paid by Theodahad to the sons of Clovis for the murder of their cousin Amalasuntha. It is possible that some such claim may have been put forward by the Frankish princes, never at a loss for a plausible pretext for war.

CHAPTER IV.

BELISARIUS IN ROME.

Authorities.

Sources:—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, i. 14–15.

For ecclesiastical history, LIBERATUS, cap. xxi, and the so-called ANASTASIUS BIBLIOTHECARIUS in his life of Pope Agapetus (apud Muratori, iii. 128). It is convenient to use the name of this, the reputed author of the *Liber Pontificalis*, who died about 886. He seems, however, to be really responsible, even as compiler, only for some of the later portion of the book. The lives of the several Popes, at any rate at the point which we have now reached, were probably composed by various, and for the most part contemporary, biographers. (In this edition I follow the chronology of Abbé Duchesne, the latest and incomparably the best editor of the *Liber Pontificalis.*)

Guides:—

For ecclesiastical events, Milman's History of Latin Christianity and Bower's History of the Popes (1750). This last book is far too bitter and polemical in its *plaidoyerie* against the Popes, but contains many useful references, apparently taken for the most part from Baronius and Pagi.

For the almost infinite subject of Roman archaeology I have consulted chiefly the following:—

Canina's Edifizi di Roma Antica (1848–1856). Canina's conjectural restorations of the buildings of ancient Rome, even if they cannot always stand the test of detailed criticism, are a great help to an unprofessional student.

BOOK V. CH. 4.

H. Jordan's Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum. His criticism of the late imperial and early mediaeval guide-books to Rome, the Curiosum Urbis, Mirabilia Romae, and Itinerary of the Monk of Einsiedeln, is extremely helpful, the more so as he publishes the text of the documents on which he comments.

Among my other guides are J. H. Parker's Archaeology of Rome and his splendid collection of photographs, especially those of the Walls and Gates; Gregorovius's Geschichte der Stadt Rom, vol. i; E. A. Freeman's Historical and Architectural Sketches, and a paper by the same author in the British Quarterly Review (1882) on Rome during the Sieges of the Sixth Century; T. H. Dyer's article on Ancient Rome contributed to Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography (requiring modification in a few points owing to the discoveries of the last twenty years), and the same author's History of the City of Rome; Rev. Robert Burn's Old Rome (which contains all the chief discoveries down to 1880); Hemans's Ancient Christianity and Sacred Art in Italy, and Murray's Handbook (1881).

I have also to thank the Commendatore Lanciani, the well-known Roman archaeologist, for some valuable information, especially as to the Walls of Rome.

Slight information as to the movements of Belisarius in the latter half of 536.

THE events described in the preceding chapter occupied the summer and autumn of 536. How Belisarius was occupied during this interval it is not easy to say. The notes of time given us by Procopius in this part of his narrative are indistinct; nor have we between the siege of Neapolis and the siege of Rome any of those little personal touches which indicate the presence of an eye-witness. Possibly the historian was still at Carthage, attached to the staff of the African army. If in Italy, he was perhaps engaged in administrative work in some one of the towns of

Procopius was probably at Beneventum.

Southern Italy, such as Beneventum, of which he gives at this point of his narrative a short account full of archaeological information. The name of the place, at

first Maleventum, from the fierce winds which rage there as well as in Dalmatia [1], but afterwards changed to Beneventum, to avoid the ill sound of the other ('for the Latins call wind *ventus* [βέντος] in their language')—the traditions of Diomed the founder of the city—the grinning tusks of the Calydonian boar [2] slain by his uncle Meleager, still preserved down to the days of Procopius—the legend of the Palladium stolen by Diomed and Ulysses from the temple of Athené at Troy and handed on by the former to Aeneas—the doubt where this Palladium was then preserved, whether at Rome or Constantinople [3]—all this archaeo-

[1] In Dalmatia, says Procopius, the wind is often strong enough to lift up a man and the horse which he is riding and dashing them down again to slay them. When it blows in its strength all prudent persons keep indoors. This is that Bora of which mention has already been made in connection with the battle of Frigidus. See vol. i. p. 575. A similar violent wind, 'the Helm Wind,' blows in the neighbourhood of Cross Fell in Cumberland. (See Sopwith's Account of the Mining Districts of Alston Moor, pp. 58–63.)

[2] 'Three palms in circumference.'

[3] Procopius's account of the Palladium is worth transcribing at length for its bearing on the history of early Greek and Asiatic art, especially with reference to Dr. Schliemann's discoveries. 'Where the original statue is, the Romans say that they do not know, but they show a copy of it carved in stone which even down to my time has remained in the temple of Fortune before the brazen image of Athené. The latter is in an open space eastward of the temple. This stone statue [the copy of the Palladium] represents the goddess in a martial attitude, raising her spear as if for battle and clad in a *chiton* reaching down to her feet. *The face is not like the ordinary Greek effigies of Athené, but is altogether of the old Egyptian type.* The Byzantines say that the original statue was buried by the Emperor Constantine in the Forum [at Constantinople] which bears his name' (De B. G. i. 15). Of course the Byzantines' version of the story was prompted by the hope of eternal dominion for their city.

BOOK V. CH. 4. 536. logical gossip flows from the Herodotean pen of our historian with a fulness which suggests that to him the autumn of 536 was in after days chiefly memorable as the time of his sojourn at Beneventum.

Consolidation of the Emperor's power in Southern Italy.

It seems likely that Belisarius devoted the summer and autumn months of 536 to the consolidation of his conquests in Southern Italy. Cumae, that town by Lake Avernus of old Sibylline fame, which was the only fortress besides Neapolis in the province of Campania, was occupied by him with a sufficient garrison. Calabria and Apulia, as has been already said, offered themselves as willing subjects to the Byzantine Emperor. A hardy and martial people like the Goths, holding the central Apennine chain, might have given Belisarius some trouble by separating Apulia from Campania and intercepting the communications between the Hadriatic and Tyrrhene seas; but this danger was removed by the convenient treachery of Pitzas the Goth, probably the same person as the Pitzias who was victor in the war of Sirmium [1]. He now commanded in the province of Samnium, and brought over with him not only his personal followers, but at least half of the province, to the allegiance of the Emperor [2].

Desertion of Pitzas.

Thus, with scarcely a stroke struck, had nearly the whole of that fair territory which modern geography knows as the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies been lost to the Goths and recovered by 'the commonwealth of

[1] See vol. iii. p. 395.

[2] Procopius says that the Goths 'beyond the river which passes through the middle of the province refused to follow Pitzas and become subject to the Emperor.' He does not specify the river more particularly. It was probably either the Tifernus (*Biferno*) or the Sagrus (*Sangro*).

Rome.' Belisarius might well pause for a few months to secure these conquests and to await the result of the negotiations which Witigis, evidently somewhat half-hearted about his resistance, had opened up with Constantinople. Besides, he had reason to expect that he would soon receive an important communication from the Bishop of Rome himself; and before the winter had fairly commenced that communication came. To understand its full importance we must rapidly turn over a few pages of Papal history.

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Attitudes of the Popes towards the successors of Theodoric: Felix III, 12 July, 526, to 22 Sept. 530; Boniface II, 22 Sept. 530, to 17 Oct. 532; John II, 2 Jan. 533, to 8 May, 535.

It has been already said that, after the death of the unfortunate Pope John in the prison of Theodoric, a succession of somewhat inconspicuous Popes filled the chair of St. Peter. Neither Felix III, Boniface II, nor John II did anything to recall the stirring times of the previous Felix or of Hormisdas: but the long duel with Constantinople had ended in the glorious triumph of Rome; and the hard fate of John I had warned the pontiffs that their time was not yet come for an open rupture with 'Dominus Noster' the King of the Goths and Romans, in his palace by the Hadriatic. A cordial theological alliance therefore with Byzantium, and trembling lip-loyalty to Ravenna, was the attitude of the Popes during these years of transition. There were the customary disputes and disturbances at the election of each Pontiff, varied by stringent decrees of the Roman Senate against bribery, by attempts on the part of the King's counsellors to magnify his share in the nomination to the vacant see, and by one yet stranger attempt on the part of Pope Boniface to acquire the power of nominating his successor to the Pontificate—a power such as a servile Parliament of the sixteenth century

Attempt of Pope Boniface to nominate Vigilius as his successor.

BOOK V. CH. 4. conferred on Henry VIII with reference to the English crown. This scheme, however, was too audacious to succeed. Boniface was forced, probably by the pressure of public opinion, to revoke and even to burn the decree of nomination. The chief interest of this event for posterity lies in the fact that the person who was to have been benefited by the decree was the adroit but restless and unprincipled deacon Vigilius, of whose later intrigues for the acquisition of the Papal throne, and sorrows when he had obtained the coveted dignity, we shall hear abundantly in the future course of this history.

Apparent divergence of teaching between Hormisdas and John II.

Theologically this uneventful period has a conspicuous interest of its own, as being one of the great battle-fields of the assertors and impugners of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. One of the usual childish logomachies of the East was imported into Rome by certain Scythian monks, who pressed, as a matter of life and death, the orthodoxy of the formula 'One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh' as against the heretical 'One *person* of the Trinity suffered in the flesh.' Hormisdas, before whom the
521. matter was at first brought, had showed the usual good sense of Rome by trying simply to crush out the unintelligible and unprofitable discussion. In doing so, however, he used words which certainly seemed to convey to the non-theological mind the idea that he regarded the phrase 'One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh' as heretical. That phrase
533. a later Pope, John II, under some pressure from Justinian, that he might not seem to countenance Nestorianism, adopted as agreeing with the apostolic teaching; and it has consequently ever since been

considered strictly orthodox to use it. Here are obviously the materials for a discussion, very interesting to theologians. The literature of the Hormisdas controversy is already considerable, and it is quite possible that the last word has not yet been spoken regarding it. BOOK V. CH. 4.

The successor of John II, Pope Agapetus, during his short episcopate of ten months, saw more of the world than many of his predecessors in much longer pontificates. After the mission of Peter and Rusticus had failed, through his own treachery and vacillation, King Theodahad determined to make one more attempt to assuage the just resentment of Justinian. Knowing the great influence which since the reunion of the Churches the Roman pontiff exerted over the Eastern Caesar, he decided that Agapetus should be sent to Constantinople on an embassy of peace. To overcome the natural reluctance of a person of advanced age, and in a position of such high dignity, to act as his letter-carrier on a long and toilsome winter journey, Theodahad sent a message to him and to the Roman Senate informing them that, unless they succeeded in making his peace with Justinian, the senators, their wives, their sons, and their daughters should all be put to the sword [1]. Truly the instincts of self-preservation in the coward are cruel. Agapetus Pope, 13 May, 535, to 22 April, 536.

Agapetus entered Constantinople early in 536 [2], and

[1] Liberatus, Breviarium, cap. xxi.

[2] See Clinton's Fasti Romani, s. a. 535. It is admitted that the date in the Liber Pontificalis, '10 Kalend. Maii,' is a mistake for 'Martii.' (Or rather, as Duchesne remarks, it is 'un nouveau spécimen de ces interpolations de dates qui se sont produites d'assez bonne heure dans cette région du L. P.' The same date

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535-6.

The Pope sent on an embassy to Constantinople.

was received with great demonstrations of respect by the Emperor and the citizens. In the fulfilment of Theodahad's commission, as we know, he met with no success. The Emperor replied,—and his reply is characteristic of the huckstering spirit in which he made war,—that after the great expenses to which his treasury had been put in preparing the expedition for Italy he could not now draw back, leaving its object unattained[1]. But if Agapetus could not or would not effect anything on behalf of his Gothic sovereign he effected much for the advancement of his own and his successors' dignity; and this visit of his is a memorable step in the progress of the Papacy towards an Universal Patriarchate. The see of Constantinople was at this time filled by Anthimus, recently translated thither from Trebizond by the influence of Theodora, and strongly suspected of sharing the Eutychian views of his patroness. Agapetus sternly refused to recognise Anthimus as lawful Patriarch of Constantinople, on the double ground of the ecclesiastical canon against translations and of his suspected heresy. Justinian tried the effect, so powerful on all others, of the thunder of the imperial voice and the frown on the imperial brow. 'Either comply with my request or I will cause thee to be carried away into banishment.' Quite unmoved, the noble old man replied in these memorable words: 'I who am but a sinner came with eager longing to gaze upon the most Christian Emperor Justinian. In his place I find a Diocletian, whose threats do not

Agapetus refuses to recognise Anthimus as Patriarch of Constantinople, and procures his removal.

'10 Kal. Mai' is given a little lower down as that of the death of Agapetus.)

[1] This characteristic touch is only in Liberatus.

one whit terrify me.' It must be recorded, for the credit of Justinian, that this bold language moved his admiration rather than his anger. He allowed the Bishop of Rome to question the Patriarch of Constantinople whether he admitted the two natures in Christ; and when the faltering answers of Anthimus proclaimed him a secret Monophysite, Justinian, who always assumed in public the attitude of an opponent of his wife's heresy, at once drove him from the see and from the city. A new prelate, Mennas, of undoubted Chalcedonian orthodoxy, was consecrated by Agapetus. Technically the rights of the see of Constantinople may have been saved, but there was certainly something in the whole proceeding which suggested the idea that, after all, the so-called Patriarch of New Rome was only a suffragan bishop in the presence of the successor of St. Peter.

Agapetus consecrates the new Patriarch, 13 March, 536.

Much had Agapetus done, and more was he doing, to repress the reviving Eutychianism of the East—encouraged though it was by the favour of Theodora—when death ended his career. He died on the 22nd of April, 536 (when Belisarius was on the point of returning from Carthage to Sicily), and his body, enclosed in a leaden coffin, was brought from Constantinople to Rome and buried in the Basilica of St. Peter.

The new Pope, Silverius, is said to have been intruded into the see by the mere will of 'the tyrant Theodahad,' who, moved himself by a bribe, brought terror to bear on the minds of the clergy to prevent any resistance to his will. It is, however, strongly suspected that this suggestion of an election vitiated by duresse is a mere afterthought in order to excuse the highly irregular proceedings which, as we shall

Silverius Pope, 8 June, 536, to 11 March, 537.

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hereafter see, were connected with his deposition[1]. One fact, rare if not unique in the history of the Papacy, distinguishes the personal history of Silverius. A Pope himself, he was also the son of a Pope. He was the offspring, born in lawful wedlock, of the sainted and strong-willed Hormisdas, who of course must have been a widower when he entered the service of the Church. We fail, however, to find in the gentle and peace-loving Silverius any trace of the adamantine character of his dictatorial father. Not of a noble or independent nature, he appears to be pushed about by ruder men and women, Gothic and Roman, according to their own needs and caprices, and is at last hustled out of the way more ignominiously than any of his predecessors. Domineering fathers make not unfrequently timorous and abject sons.

Son of Pope Hormisdas.

Message from the Pope to Belisarius, offering to surrender the city.

Such, then, was the Pope Silverius—for we now return to contemplate the progress of the imperial army—who, having sworn a solemn oath of fealty to Witigis, now, near the end of 536, sent messengers to Belisarius to offer the peaceful surrender of the city of Rome. It was not, however, with any chivalrous intention of throwing themselves into the breach, and doing battle for the commonwealth of Rome, that this invitation was sent. Silverius and the citizens had heard, of course, full particulars of the siege and sack of Naples, and wished to avoid similar calamities falling upon them. Weighing one danger against another, they thought that they should run less risk from the wrath of the

[1] Liberatus says distinctly that he was elected by the citizens of Rome. 'De cujus [Agapeti] decessu audiens *Romana civitas*, Silverium subdiaconum, Hormisdae quondam papae filium *elegit ordinandum*' (Breviarium, cap. xxii).

Goths than from that of the Byzantines, and therefore sent Fidelius, the late Quaestor of Athalaric, to invite Belisarius to Rome, and to promise that the City should be surrendered to him without a struggle. Belisarius gladly accepted the invitation, and leaving Herodian with a garrison of 300 foot-soldiers in charge of Naples, he marched by the Latin Way from Campania to Rome. While the Via Appia was the great sea-coast road to Rome, the Via Latina took a more inland course by the valley of the Liris and along the base of the Volscian hills, a course in fact very nearly coinciding with that of the modern railway between Rome and Naples. Belisarius and his army passed therefore through the town of Casinum, and immediately under its steep hill, upon the summit of which a man who was to attain even wider fame than Belisarius had reared, amid the ruins of Apollo's temple, the mother-edifice of a thousand European convents. It was Benedict of Nursia, who, little heeding the clash of opposing races, and scarce hearing the tramp of invading armies, was making for *Monte Cassino* an imperishable name in the history of humanity.

Belisarius marches by the Via Latina.

When the Gothic garrison of Rome learned that Belisarius was at hand, and that the Romans were disposed to surrender the City, they came to the conclusion that against such a general, aided by the good-will of the citizens, they should never be able to prevail, and that they would therefore withdraw peaceably from Rome. Leuderis alone, their brave old general, refused to quit the post which had been assigned to him, but was unable to command the obedience of his soldiers, or to recall them to some resolution more worthy of the Gothic name. They

The Gothic garrison evacuate Rome.

BOOK V. CH. 4. 536. Entry of Belisarius into Rome.

therefore marched quietly out by the Flaminian Gate (on the site of the modern Porta del Popolo), while Belisarius and his host entered by the Porta Asinaria, that stately gate flanked by two semicircular towers which, though walled up, still stands near the Porta San Giovanni and behind the great Lateran Basilica. Leuderis was quietly taken prisoner, and sent with the keys of the city to Justinian. So much for the infallible precautions which Witigis assured the Goths he had taken against the surrender of the city, the 'numerous men and highly intelligent officer who would never allow it to fall into the hands of Belisarius [1].'

The entry of the Byzantine troops into Rome took place on the 9th of December, 536 [2]. Thus, as Procopius remarks, after sixty years of barbarian domination, was the city recovered for the Empire.

[1] (From the speech of Witigis.) Ὅπως μέντοι μηδέν τι ξυμβήσεται τοιοῦτον, ἐγὼ προνοήσω. Ἄνδρας τε γὰρ πολλοὺς καὶ ἄρχοντα ξυνετώτατον ἀπολείψομεν οἳ Ῥώμην φυλάξαι ἱκανοὶ ἔσονται (Procopius, De B. G. i. 11).

[2] This date rests on the authority of Evagrius, the ecclesiastical historian, who was born possibly in this very year 536 (H. E. iv. 19). The Liber Pontificalis fixes it on the 4th of the Ides of December, the 10th of the month. The text of Procopius seems to be corrupt: Ῥώμη τε αὖθις ἑξήκοντα ἔτεσιν ὕστερον ὑπὸ μηνὸς . . . ἤλω. It is suggested that ὑπό represents θ. απε., 'the 9th of Apellaeus,' that being, as stated by Evagrius, the Greek name of December. It would seem more natural (if grammar would tolerate this use of ὑπό) to understand Procopius as saying that Rome was subject to the barbarians sixty years all but a month. Had he some tradition, which we have lost, as to the precise date of the capture of Rome by Odovaçar? [Comparetti in his translation inclines to the above rendering, 'e Roma fù ripresa dopo sessant' anni meno un mese (?) nell' anno undecimo (?) da che Giustiniano teneva l'autorità imperiale.']

Belisarius seems not to have taken up his abode in any of the imperial residences on the Palatine Hill, where the representative of the Byzantine Caesar might naturally have been expected to dwell, but, prescient of the coming struggle, to have at once fixed his quarters on the Pincian Hill. This ridge on the north of Rome, so well known by every visitor to the modern city, who, however short his stay, is sure to have seen the long train of carriages climbing to or returning from the fashionable drive, and who has probably stood upon its height in order to obtain the splendid view which it affords of the dome of St. Peter's, was not one of the original seven hills of the city, nor formed, strictly speaking, a part even of imperial Rome. Known in earlier times as the Collis Hortulorum, or Hill of Gardens, it occupied too commanding a position to be safely left outside the defences, and had therefore been included within the circuit of the walls of Honorius, some of the great retaining walls of the gardens of M. Q. Acilius Glabrio having been incorporated with the new defences[1]. Here then, in the Domus Pinciana[2], the imperial General took up his abode. Albeit probably somewhat dismantled, it was doultless still a stately and spacious palace, though it has now

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Belisarius fixes his quarters in the Pincian Palace.

Advantages of the position.

[1] I give this fact on the authority of S. Lanciani, who considers this part of the wall to belong to the Republican age. Its comparatively early date is shown by the large masses of *opus reticulatum* which it contains, this diamond-shaped style of brickwork not having been used in Rome after the earliest age of the Empire.

[2] The Domus Pinciana is mentioned in Cassiodori Variarum, iii. 10, where Theodoric orders Festus to transport the marbles which it appears have been taken down from the Pincian house ('quae de domo Pinciana constat esse deposita') to Ravenna.

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disappeared and left no trace behind. It was admirably adapted for his purpose, being in fact a watch-tower commanding a view all round the northern horizon, from the Vatican to the Mons Sacer[1]. From this point a ride of a few minutes on his swift charger would bring him to the next great vantage-ground, the Castra Praetoria, whose square enclosure, projecting beyond the ordinary line of the Honorian walls, made a tempting object of attack, but also a splendid watch-tower for defence, carrying on the general's view to the Praenestine Gate (Porta Maggiore) on the south-east of the city. Thus, from these two points, about a third of the whole circuit of the walls, and nearly all of that part which was actually attacked by the Goths, was visible.

Preparations for the defence of Rome.

That the city would have to be defended, and that it would tax all his powers to defend it successfully, was a matter that was perfectly clear to the mind of Belisarius, though the Romans, dwelling in a fool's paradise of false security, deemed that all their troubles were over when the 4000 Goths marched forth by the Flaminian Gate. They thought that the war would inevitably be decided elsewhere by some great pitched battle. It seemed to them obvious that so skilful a general as Belisarius would never consent to be besieged in a city so little defended by nature as was the wide circuit of imperial Rome, nor undertake the almost superhuman task of providing for the sustenance

[1] I think that this is correct, and probably an understatement of the extent of the view. But the groves and gardens of the Villas Borghese and Albani outside the walls make it difficult now to say exactly how much was visible from the Pincian in the time of Belisarius.

of that vast population in addition to his own army. Such, however, was the scheme of Belisarius, who knew that behind the walls of Rome his little army could offer a more effectual resistance to the enemy than in any pitched battle on the Campanian plains. Slowly and sadly the citizens awoke to the fact that their hasty defection from the Gothic cause was by no means to relieve them from the hardships of a siege. Possibly some of them, in the year of misery that lay before them, even envied the short and sharp agony of Neapolis.

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Commissariat.

The commissariat of the city was naturally one of the chief objects of the General's solicitude. From Sicily, still the granary of the State, his ships had brought and were daily bringing large supplies of grain. These were carried into the great warehouses (*horrea publica*), which were under the care of the Praefectus Annonae [1]. At the same time the citizens, sorely grumbling, were set busily to work to bring into the city the corn and provisions of all kinds that were stored in the surrounding country.

Repair of the walls.

Side by side with this great work went on the repair of the walls, which Belisarius found in many places somewhat ruinous. Two hundred and sixty years had elapsed since they were erected by Aurelian and Probus, one hundred and thirty since they were renewed by Honorius, and in the latter interval they may have suffered not only from the slow foot of time, but from the destroying hands of the soldiers of Alaric, of Gaiseric, and of Ricimer. Theodoric's steady and persevering labours had effected something, but much still remained to be done. Belisarius repaired the

[1] See vol. ii. pp. 461 and 567–576.

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rents which still existed, drew a deep and wide fosse round the outer side of the wall, and supplied what he considered to be a deficiency in the battlements by adding a cross-wall to each on the left hand, so that the soldier might dispense with the use of a shield, being guarded against arrows and javelins hurled against him from that quarter[1].

Present aspect of these walls.

The walls and gates of imperial Rome, substantially the same walls which Belisarius defended, and many of the same gates at which the Goths battered, are still visible; and few historical monuments surpass them in interest. No survey of them has yet been made sufficiently minute to enable us to say with certainty to what date each portion of them belongs: but some general conclusions may be safely drawn even by the superficial observer. Here you may see the *opus reticulatum*, that cross-hatched brickwork which marks a building of the Julian or Flavian age; there the fine and regular brickwork of Aurelian; there again the poor debased work of the time of Honorius. A little further on, you come to a place where layers of bricks regularly laid cease altogether. Mere rubble-work thrust in anyhow, blocks of marble, fragments of columns; such is the material with which the fatal holes in the walls have been darned and patched; and here antiquaries are generally disposed to see the 'tumultuary' restorations of Belisarius

[1] I presume that this is the meaning of Procopius: Ἔπαλξιν δὲ ἑκάστην ἐγγώνιον ἐποίει, οἰκοδομίαν δή τινα ἑτέραν ἐκ πλαγίου τοῦ εὐωνύμου τιθέμενος, ὅπως οἱ ἐνθένδε τοῖς ἐπιοῦσι μαχόμενοι πρὸς τῶν ἐν ἀριστερᾷ σφίσι τειχομαχούντων ἥκιστα βάλλωνται (De B. G. i. 14). I am not able to state whether any traces of these cross-battlements or of the Belisarian fosse have been discovered.

working in hot haste to complete his repairs before Witigis or the later Totila should appear before the walls. In a few places the gap in the brickwork is supplied by different and more massive materials. Great square blocks of the black volcanic stone called *tufa*, of which the wall of Servius Tullius was composed, are the sign of this intrusive formation. Are these also due to the rapid restorations of Belisarius, or was it part of the original plan to make the now superseded wall of the King do duty, after nine centuries, in the rampart of the Emperor? We turn an angle of the walls, and we see the mighty arches of the interlacing aqueducts by which Rome was fed with water from the Tiburtine and the Alban hills, with admirable skill made available for the defence of the city. We move onward, we come to Christian monograms, to mediaeval inscriptions, to the armorial bearings of Popes. At the south of the city we look upon the grand Bastion, which marks the restoring hand of the great Farnese Pope, Paul III, employing the genius of Sangallo. We pass the great gate of Ostia, that gate through which St. Paul is believed to have been led forth to martyrdom, and which now bears his name. The wall runs down sharply to the Tiber, at the foot of that strange artificial hill the Monte Testaccio; for half a mile it lines the left bank of the stream; then at the gate of Porto it reappears on the opposite side of the Tiber. Here it changes its character, and the change is itself a compendium of mediaeval history. The wall which on the eastern shore was Imperial, with only some marks of Papal repair, now becomes purely Papal; the turrets give place to bastions; Urban VIII, as name-giver to the

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rampart, takes the place of Aurelian[1]. We see at once how dear 'the Leonine city' was to the Pontifical heart; we discern that St. Peter's and the Vatican have taken the place which in imperial Rome was occupied by the Palatine, in Republican Rome by the Forum, the Capitol, and the Temple of Concord.

Contrasted periods of history.

As everywhere in Rome, so pre-eminently in our circuit of the wall, the oldest and the newest ages are constantly jostling against one another. At the east of the city we were looking at the tufa blocks hewn by the masons of Servius Tullius. Now on the west we see the walls by the Porta Aurelia showing everywhere the dints of French bullets hurled against them when Oudinot in 1849 crushed out the little life of the Roman Republic of Mazzini. For yet more recent history we turn again to our northern starting-point, and there, almost under the palace of Belisarius, we see the stretch of absolutely new wall which marks the extent of the practicable breach through which the troops of Victor Emmanuel entered Rome in September, 1870.

Object of Aurelian in building the walls.

A first and even a second perambulation of the walls of Rome, especially on the outside, may hardly give the observer an adequate conception of their original completeness as a work of defence. It has been well pointed out by one of our German authorities[2] that Aurelian's object in constructing it cannot have been merely to furnish cover for the comparatively small

[1] The course of the wall of Aurelian is indeed visible in many places in the Trans-tiberine region, but it is merely an archaeological curiosity there, quite eclipsed in importance by the Papal fortification.

[2] Jordan, Topographie der Stadt Rom, i. 348.

numbers of the *cohortes urbanae*, the ordinary city-guard, but that he must have contemplated the necessity of a whole army garrisoning the city and defending his work. For this reason we have in Aurelian's original line of circumvallation, and to some extent, but less perfectly, in the Honorian restoration of it, a complete gallery or covered way carried all round the inside of the wall[1]. Nowhere can this original idea of the wall be better studied than on the south-east of the city, in the portion between the Amphitheatrum Castrense and the Porta Asinaria, or, in ecclesiastical language, between the Church of Santa Croce and that of St. John Lateran. Here, if we walk outside, we see the kind of work with which the rest of our tour of inspection has already made us familiar, that is, a wall from 50 to 60 feet high, with square towers some 20 feet higher than the rest of the work, projecting from the circuit of the wall at regular intervals of 33 yards[2]. If we now pass in, not by the Porta Asinaria, which is closed, but by its representative the modern Porta San Giovanni, we find ourselves looking upon a structure greatly resembling one

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The inner gallery.

[1] In the works erected at Chollerford in Northumberland (Cilurnum), for the defence of the bridge over the North Tyne, we find a humbler specimen of the same kind of covered way.

[2] Exactly 100 Roman feet. The face of the tower (C D) is 24 feet long, the sides (B C, D E) 12 feet.

C D

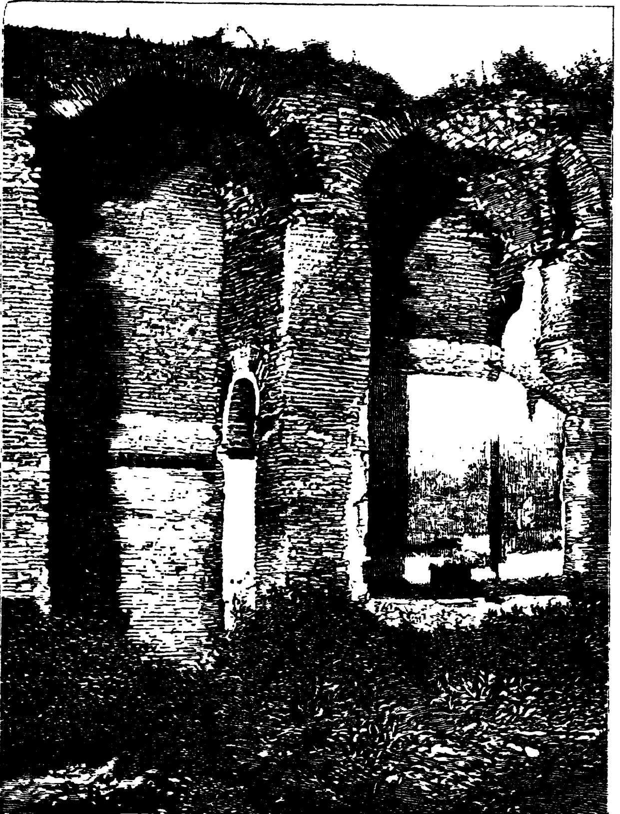
A B E F

Many maps of modern Rome indicate the presence of these square towers. The greater or less regularity of their occurrence is generally a safe indication of the better or worse preservation of the original wall.

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of the great Roman aqueducts, and probably often taken for such by travellers. We can see of course the backs of the square towers, but between every two of these there are seven tall arches about 33 feet high. A window through the wall near the bottom of each of these corresponds with an opening outside about half-way up the face of the wall, and thus lets us see that the level of the ground inside is from 20 to 30 feet higher than outside, the apparent height of the wall inside being of course reduced by the same amount. In the wall behind the arches we can see the holes marking the places where the ends of two sets of rafters, one above the other, have rested. Moreover, the piers which separate the arches are pierced by another set of tall thin arches at right angles to the others. A glance at the accompanying engravings will give a clearer idea of the construction of the walls than a page of description. The meaning of all these indications evidently is that a corridor or covered way ran round the whole inner circuit of the wall of Aurelian, where that was finished according to the design of the imperial builder. This gallery was two stories high between the towers; a third story would be added where these gave the needful height[1]. Besides these covered galleries, which were used for the rapid transfer of troops from one part of the circuit

[1] In the corridor on the western side of the Porta S. Sebastiano, at the third tower from the gate, Mr. Parker discovered an early fresco representing the Virgin with the infant Christ, which he believes to be 'the earliest Madonna that is known as distinct from the offering of the Magi.' Whether his inference that a chapel was constructed here for the soldiers at the time of Theodoric's repairs be correct or not, at any rate the existence of the fresco is an interesting fact (Archaeology of Rome, i. 168).



FRONT VIEW



SECTION

CORRIDOR INSIDE THE WALLS OF ROME

From Photographs in J. H. Parker's Series] [*To face page 92. Vol IV*

to another, there was the regular path at the top of the walls, partially protected by battlements, on which the defenders were doubtless mustered when actual fighting was going forward.

State of the walls in the eighth century.

For our knowledge of the fortifications of the city we are not entirely dependent on our present observation of the walls, battered as they have been by the storms of the Middle Ages, and still more grievously as they have suffered at the hands of restorers and modernisers in the last three centuries. The 'Pilgrim of Einsiedeln,' as he is conventionally termed, a visitor to Rome in the eighth or ninth century, recorded the most noteworthy objects of the Eternal City in a MS. which is preserved in the monastery of Einsiedeln in Switzerland. Among other information, he gives us the precise number of the towers, the battlements, and the loopholes in each section of the wall, including even the sanitary arrangements rendered necessary by the permanent presence of a large body of troops. It has been generally supposed that the Einsiedeln Pilgrim himself counted the towers of the sacred city of St. Peter; but one of our best German authorities[1] suggests, with great probability, that he is really transcribing some much earlier official document, possibly that drawn up by the architects of Honorius at the beginning of the fifth century[2].

The Pilgrim of Einsiedeln.

[1] Jordan, Topographie der Stadt Rom, ii. 156, 170. He suggests 'Ammon the geometer,' who, according to Olympiodorus (apud Photium, Bonn edition, p. 469), 'took the measure of the walls of Rome at the time when the Goths made their attack upon the city.'

[2] The reader may be interested in seeing this technical description of that portion of the defences which was chiefly conspicuous in the Gothic siege of Rome. The *turres* and *fenestrae* (towers and

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536. General survey of Rome before the siege.

While Belisarius is repairing the mouldering walls and assigning to the rude cohorts of his many-nationed army their various duties in the anticipated siege, we may allow ourselves to cast a hasty glance over the city which he has set himself to defend. A hasty glance, for this is not the time nor the place for minute antiquarian discussion; yet a glance of some sad and earnest interest, since we know that this is the last time that Rome in her glory will be seen by mortal man. The things which have befallen her up

loopholes) need no explanation: the *propugnacula* are the battlements, or, to speak more accurately, the merlons of the embattled wall: *necessariae* are believed to be equivalent to latrinae. It will be remembered that 100 Roman feet was the regulation distance between tower and tower.

'A portâ Flamineâ cum ipsâ portâ usque ad portam Pincianam clausam:

Turres XXVIIII, propugnacula DCXLIIII, necessariae III, fenestrae majores forinsecus LXXV, minores CXVII.

A portâ Pincianâ clausâ cum ipsâ portâ usque ad portam Salariam:

Turrš XXII, p̄p̄g CCXLVI, necesš XVII, fenest. majoř forinš CC, minoř CLX.

A portâ Salariâ cum ipsâ portâ usque Numentanam:

Tuřř X, p̄p̄g CXCVIIII, neč II, feñ majoř forinš LXXI, miñ LXV.

A portâ Numentanâ cum ipsâ portâ usque Tiburtinam:

Tuřř LVII, p̄p̄g DCCCVI, necesš II, fenest majoř forinš CCXIIII, minoř CC.

A portâ Tiburtinâ cum ipsâ portâ usque ad Praenestinam:

Tuřř XVIIII, p̄p̄g cum portâ Praenestinâ CCCII, necesš I, feñ majoř foriñs LXXX, minoř CVIII.

A portâ Praenestinâ usque ad Asinariam:

Tuřř XXVI, p̄p̄g DIIII, neč VI, fenst majoř forinš CLXXX, minor CL.

A portâ Asinariâ usque Metroviam:

Tuřř XX, p̄p̄g CCCXLII, neč IIII, fenest majoř forinš CXXX, minoř CLXXX.'

(From Jordan's Topographie der Stadt Rom, ii. 578–9.)

to this time have been only slight and transitory shocks, which have left no lasting dint upon her armour—Alaric's burning of the palace of Sallust, Gaiseric's half-accomplished spoliation of the golden roof of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, some havoc wrought in the insolence of their triumph by the *foederati* of Ricimer. More destructive, no doubt, was the slow process of denudation already commenced by the unpatriotic hands of the Romans themselves, and only partially checked by the decrees of Majorian and Theodoric. Still, as a whole, Rome the Golden City, the City of Consuls and Emperors, the City of Cicero's orations, of Horace's idle perambulations, of Trajan's magnificent constructions, yet stood when the Gothic war began. In the squalid, battered, depopulated cluster of ruins, over which twenty-eight years later sounded the heralds' trumpets proclaiming that the Gothic war was ended, it would have been hard for Cicero, Horace, or Trajan to recognise his home. Classical Rome we are looking on for the last time; the Rome of the Middle Ages, the city of sacred shrines and relics and pilgrimages, is about to take her place.

Silence of Procopius as to the effect produced on him by the sight of Rome.

It is impossible not to regret that Procopius has allowed himself to say so little as to the impression made on him by Rome. He must have entered the city soon after his chief, travelling by the Appian Way, the smooth and durable construction of which moved him to great admiration[1]. But of the city

[1] These are his words (De B. G. i. 14): 'Now the Via Appia is a five days' journey for a good pedestrian, leading from Rome to Capua. It is so broad that two waggons can pass one another along its whole course, and it is eminently worthy of observation. For all

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itself, except of its gates and walls in so far as these require description in order to illustrate the siege, he has very little to say. It is easy to understand his silence. Most authors shrink from writing about the obvious and well-known. It would perhaps be easier to meet with ten vivid descriptions of the Island of Skye than one of the Strand or Cheapside. But not the less is it a loss for us that that quick and accurate observer, the Herodotus of the Post-Christian age, has not recorded more of his impressions of the streets, the buildings, and the people of Rome. Let us endeavour, however, to put ourselves in his place, and to reconstruct the city, at least in general outline, as he must have beheld it.

Imaginary progress of Procopius through the city. Porta Appia.

Journeying, as it is most probable that Procopius did, by the Appian Way, he would enter Rome by the gate then called the Porta Appia, but now the Porta di San Sebastiano, one of the finest of the still remaining entrances through the wall of Aurelian, with two noble towers, square within and semicircular without, the upper part of which, according to a careful English observer[1], bears traces of the restoring hand of Theo-

the stones composing it being mill-stones and very hard by nature were brought by Appius from quarries a long way off, there being none like them in the district itself. Having made these stones smooth and even and cut them into polygons, they fitted them one into another without using rubble or any other cement. Now these stones cohere so perfectly with one another that they look as if they had not been artificially joined but had grown together. Nor has their smoothness been impaired by the daily passage of horses and waggons over them for so great a length of time. They still fit as perfectly as ever and have lost nothing of their original beauty.' [Χάλικα, 'rubble or cement,' is Comparetti's conjectural emendation for χαλκά, 'brass.']

[1] Mr. J. H. Parker.

doric[1]. Immediately after entering the city, Procopius would find himself passing under the still-preserved Arch of Drusus; and those of Trajan and Verus, spanning the intra-mural portion of the Appian Way, would before long attract his notice. This portion of the city, now so desolate and empty of inhabitants, was then probably thickly sown with the houses of the lower order of citizens.

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The Baths of Caracalla.

High on his left, when he had proceeded somewhat more than half-a-mile, rose the mighty pile known to the ancients as the Thermae Antoninianae, and to the moderns as the Baths of Caracalla. Even in its ruins this building gives to the spectator an almost overwhelming idea of vastness and solidity. But when Procopius first saw it, the 1600 marble seats for bathers[2] were probably all occupied, the gigantic swimming-bath was filled with clear cold water from the Marcian aqueduct, the great circular *Caldarium*, 160 feet in diameter, showed dimly through the steam the forms of hundreds of bathing Romans. Men were wrestling in the Palaestra and walking up and down in the Peristyle connected with the baths. Polished marble and deftly wrought mosaics lined the walls and covered the floors. At every turn one came upon some priceless work of art, like the Farnese Bull, the Hercules, the Flora, those statues the remnants of

[1] A curious inscription on the left-hand wall inside this gate (accompanied by the figure of an archangel) records the invasion of *gens foresteria* on the last day but one before the feast of St. Michael, and their 'abolition' by the Roman people under the command of Jacobus de Pontianis. The *gens foresteria* were the troops of King Robert of Naples co-operating with the Orsini, in the year 1327.

[2] Olympiodorus apud Photium, p. 469 (ed. Bonn).

BOOK V. CH. 4. 536. which, dug out of these ruins as from an unfailing quarry, have immortalised the names of Papal Nephews and made the fortunes of the museums of Bourbon Kings[1].

The buildings on the Palatine. And now, as the traveller moved on, there rose more and more proudly above him the hill which has become for all later ages synonymous with regal power and magnificence, the imperial Palatine. Not as now, with only a villa and a convent standing erect upon it, the rest, grass and wild-flowers, and ruins for the most part not rising above the level of the ground, the whole hill was crowded with vast palaces, in which each successive dynasty had endeavoured to outshine its predecessor in magnificence. Here, first, rose the tall but perhaps somewhat barbarous edifice with which Severus had determined to arrest the attention of his fellow-provincials from Africa travelling along the Appian Way, in order that their first question about Rome might be answered by his name. Just below it was the mysterious Septizonium, the work of the same Emperor, the porch of his palace and the counterpart of his tomb, of whose seven sets of columns, rising tier above tier, three were yet remaining only three centuries ago, when the remorseless Sixtus V transported them to the Vatican. Behind the palace of Severus, on the summit of the Palatine, were visible the immense banqueting halls of the Flavian Emperors, Vespasian and Domitian; behind them again the more modest house of Tiberius, and the labyrinth of apartments reared by the crazy Caligula.

[1] The first impression of a visitor to the Museums of Sculpture at Rome and Naples is that every important work came either from the Baths of Caracalla or from the Villa of Hadrian.

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Probable condition of the imperial palaces.

In what condition are we to suppose that all these imperial dwellings were maintained when the troops of the Eastern Caesar came to reclaim them for their lord? Certainly not with all that untarnished magnificence which they possessed before the troubles of the third century commenced; hardly even with the show of affluence which they may still have worn when Constantius visited Rome in 357. Two centuries had elapsed since then—two centuries of more evil than good fortune—centuries in which the struggle for mere existence had left the rulers of the State little money or time to spare for repairs or decorations. But nothing, it may fairly be argued, had yet occurred to bring these massive piles into an obviously ruinous condition. If the comparison may be allowed, these dwellings on the Palatine probably presented in the state apartments that dingy appearance of faded greatness which one sees in the country-house of a noble family long resident abroad, but externally they had lost nothing of the stateliness with which they were meant to impress the mind of the beholder.

Circus Maximus.

If Procopius ascended to the summit of the Palatine he may perchance have seen from thence, in the valley of the Circus Maximus, between the Palatine and Aventine hills, a chariot-race exhibited by the General to keep the populace in good-humour. Here the Byzantine official would feel himself to be at once at home. Whether he favoured the Blue or the Green faction we know not (though his animosity against Theodora makes us inclined to suspect him of sympathy with the Greens), but to whichsoever he belonged he could see his own faction striving for victory, and

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would hear, from at any rate a large portion of the crowd, the shouts with which they hailed the triumph, or the groans with which they lamented the defeat, of their favourite colour.

Arch of Constantine.

Continuing his journey, the historian passed under the eastern summit of the Palatine, and then beneath the Arch of Constantine, that Arch which stands at this day comparatively undefaced, showing how the first Christian emperor purloined the work of the holier heathen Trajan to commemorate his own less worthy victories. Emerging from the shadow of the Arch he stood before the Flavian Amphitheatre and looked up to the immense Colossus of Nero, that statue of the Sun-god 120 feet in height, towering almost as high as the mighty edifice itself, to which it gave its best-known name, the Colosseum. It is generally felt that the Colosseum is one of those buildings which has gained by ruin. The topmost story, consisting, not of arches like the three below it, but of mere blank wall-spaces divided by pilasters, must have had when unbroken a somewhat heavy appearance; while, on the other hand, no beholder of the still perfect building could derive that impression of massive strength which we gain by looking, through the very chasms and rents in its outer shell, at the gigantic circuit of its concentric ellipses, at the massive walls radiating upwards and outwards upon which the seats of its 87,000 spectators rested. Altogether there is a pathetic majesty in the ruined Colosseum which can hardly have belonged to it in its days of prosperity, and, as one is almost inclined to say, of vulgar self-assertion [1].

The Colosseum and the Colossus.

[1] This remark is made in Burn's Old Rome, p. 71.

But if this be true of the Colosseum itself, it is not true of the surrounding objects. The great Colossus has already been referred to. It is now represented only by a shapeless and unsightly heap of stones which once formed part of its pedestal. The ugly conical mass of brickwork near the same spot, and known as the Meta Sudans, was a beautiful upspringing fountain thirty or forty feet high when Procopius passed that way.

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Meta Sudans.

Eastwards, on the Oppian hill, stretched the long line of the Thermae Titi, the baths reared by Titus above the vast ruins of the Golden House of Nero. Immediately in front of the Colosseum (on the north-west) was the double temple reared by Hadrian in honour of Venus and Rome[1], perhaps one of the most beautiful edifices in the whole enclosure of the city. It was composed of two temples placed back to back. In one was the statue of Venus the Prosperous (Venus Felix), looking towards the Colosseum, in the other *Roma Aeterna* sat gazing towards her own Capitol. In the curvilinear pediment of the latter was a frieze, according to the opinion of some archaeologists representing Mars caressing Rhea Sylvia, and the wolf suckling their heroic offspring. Around the whole structure ran a low colonnade containing four hundred pillars.

The Baths of Titus.

Temple of Venus and Rome.

The famous Sacred Way, where once Horace loitered,

The Via Sacra.

[1] This was the Temple which according to Dion Cassius cost the architect Apollodorus his life. Hadrian sent him a drawing of the Temple which he had himself designed, expecting a compliment on his artistic skill, and received for answer, 'You have made your goddesses so large that they cannot stand up in their own houses,' a criticism in return for which Hadrian is said to have put him to death (lxix. 4).

BOOK V. CH. 4. 536. Arch of Titus.

a well-marked street, not as now a mere track through the midst of desolation, led the historian up to the marble arch of Titus. Here he doubtless looked, as we may yet look, upon the representation of the seven-branched candlestick and the other spoils of Jerusalem, the strange story of whose wanderings he has himself recorded for us in his history of the Vandalic War[1].

Basilica of Constantine.

Descending the slope of the Via Sacra, and having on his right the lofty Basilica of Constantine, whose gigantic arches (long but erroneously called the Temple of Peace) stand on their hill over against the Palatine, and seem to assert a predominance over its yet remaining ruins, Procopius now with each downward step saw the glories of the Roman Forum more fully revealed. On his left, the temple of the Great Twin Brethren, three of whose graceful Corinthian columns still survive, a well-known object to all visitors to the Forum. Hard by, the fountain from which the celestial horsemen gave their horses to drink after the battle of Lake Regillus. Further on, the long colonnades of the Basilica of Julius, four law-courts under the same roof. On his right, the tall columns of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, perhaps already supporting the roof of a Christian shrine, though not the unsightly edifice which at present clings to and defaces them; the chapel of the great Julius, the magnificent Basilica of Aemilius; and, lastly, those two venerable objects, centres for so many ages of all the political life of Rome, the Senate-house and the Rostra. The Senate was still a living body, though its limbs had long been shaken by the palsies of a timid old age; but the days when impassioned

Forum Romanum.

[1] ii. 9. (See vol. ii. p. 286, and vol. iii. p. 625.)

orators thundered to the Roman people from the lofty Rostra had long passed away. Yet we may be permitted to conjecture that Procopius, with that awe-struck admiration which he had for 'the Romans of old time,' gazed upon those weathern-worn trophies of the sea and mused on the strange contradictoriness of Fate, which had used all the harangues of those impetuous orators as instruments to fashion the serene and silent despotism of Justinian.

Capitoline Hill and buildings in front of it.

At the end of the Forum, with an embarrassment of wealth which perplexes us even in their ruins, rise the Arch of Septimius Severus, the Temple of Concord, the Temple of Vespasian, the ill-restored Temple of Saturn. Between them penetrated the Clivus Capitolinus, up which once slowly mounted the car of many a triumphing general. Behind all stretched the magnificent background of the Capitoline Hill, on the left-hand summit of which stood the superb mass of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, robbed by Gaiseric of half its golden tiles, but still resplendent under the western sun. Then came the saddle-shaped depression faced by the long Tabularium: and then the right-hand summit of the Capitoline, crowned by the Temple of Juno Moneta[1].

The Imperial Fora.

We have supposed our historian to deviate a little from the straight path in order to explore to the uttermost the buildings of the Republican Forum; but as his business lies at the northern extremity of the city, he must retrace a few of his steps and avail him-

[1] A long and bitter controversy appears to be at length put to rest by the attribution of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus to the height now occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli, and by placing the Arx where now stands the Church of Ara Coeli.

BOOK V. CH. 4. 536. self of the line of communication between the Via Sacra and the Via Flaminia which was opened up by the beneficent despotism of the Emperors. That is to say, he must leave the Forum of the Repûblic and traverse the long line of the spacious and well-planned Fora of the Caesars. In no part is the contrast between ancient and modern Rome more humiliating than here. In our day, a complex of mean and irregular streets[1], almost entirely destitute of classical interest or mediaeval picturesqueness, fills up the interval between the Capitoline and the Quirinal hills. The deeply cut entablature of the Temple of Minerva resting upon the two half-buried 'Colonnacce' in front of the baker's shop, the three pillars of the Temple of Mars Ultor, the great feudal fortress of the Tor de' Conti, and that most precious historical monument the Column of Trajan, alone redeem this region from utter wearisomeness. But this space, now so crowded and so irregular, was once the finest bit of architectural landscape-gardening in Rome. The Forum of Vespasian, the Forum of Nerva, the Forum of Augustus, the Forum of Julius, the Forum of Trajan, a series of magnificent squares and arcades, opening one into the other, occupying a space some 600 yards long by 100 wide and terminating in the mighty granite pillars of the Temple of Trajan, produced on the mind of the beholder the same kind of effect, but on a far grander scale, which is wrought by Trafalgar Square in London, or the Place de la Concorde in Paris. Let not the modern traveller, who, passing from the Corso to the Colosseum, is accosted by his driver with the glibly uttered words 'Foro Trajano,' suppose that the little

[1] Via Bonella, Via Alessandrina, and so forth.

oblong space, with a few pillar-bases which he beholds at the foot of the memorable Column, is indeed even in ruin the entire Forum of the greatest of the Emperors. The column is Trajan's column doubtless, though BOOK V. CH. 4. 536.

> 'Apostolic statues climb
> The imperial urn whose ashes slept sublime
> Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
> And looking to the stars.'

But the so-called 'Foro Trajano' is only a small transverse section of one member of the Trajanic series, the Basilica Ulpia. The column, as is well known, measured the height of earth which had to be dug away from a spur of the Capitoline hill in order to form the Forum. Between it and the Basilica Ulpia rose the two celebrated libraries of Greek and Latin authors, and between these two buildings stood once, and probably yet stood in the days of Procopius, that 'everlasting statue' of brass which by the Senate's orders was erected in honour of Sidonius, Poet-laureate and son-in-law of an Emperor[1]. In those Libraries Procopius, in the intervals of the business and peril of the siege, may often have wandered in order to increase his acquaintance with the doings of 'the Romans of old.' What treasures of knowledge, now for ever lost to the world, were still enshrined in those apartments! There all the rays of classical Art and Science were gathered into a focus. More important perhaps for us, all that the Greeks and Romans knew (and it was not a little, though carelessly recorded) concerning the Oriental civilisation which preceded theirs, and concerning the Teutonic barbarism which encompassed

The Forum of Trajan.

The Libraries.

[1] See vol. ii. p. 388.

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it, was still contained in those magnificent literary collections. There was the Chaldaean history of Berosus, there were the authentic Egyptian king-lists of Manetho, there was Livy's story of the last days of the Republic and the first days of the Empire, there was Tacitus's full history of the conquest of Britain, all that Ammianus could tell about the troubles of the third century and the conversion of Constantine, all that Cassiodorus had written about the royal Amals and the dim original of the Goths. All this perished, apparently in those twenty years of desolating war which now lie before us. It may be doubted whether for us the loss of the Bibliothecae Ulpiae is not even more to be regretted than that of the Library of Alexandria [1].

Emperor Constantius on the Forum of Trajan, 356.

Ammianus tells us [2] that when the Emperor Constantius visited Rome he gazed with admiration on the Capitol, the Colosseum, the Pantheon, and the Theatre of Pompey, but still with admiration which could express itself in words. 'But when,' says the historian, 'he came to the Forum of Trajan, that structure unique in all the world, and, as I cannot but think, marvellous in the eyes of the Divinity himself,

[1] The words of Vopiscus (Vita Probi, II), 'Usus sum praecipue libris ex Bibliotheca Ulpia, *aetate mea thermis Diocletianis*,' have been interpreted as meaning that all the contents of Trajan's libraries had been transported to the Baths of Diocletian. I think, however, we may fairly infer from Sidonius's verses about his statue,

> 'Inter auctores utriusque fixam
> Bibliothecae,'

either that this removal had been only partial, or that at some time between 300 and 450 the books had been brought back to their original home.

[2] xvi. 10. 15.

he beheld with silent amazement those gigantic interlacings of stones which it is past the power of speech to describe, and which no mortal must in future hope to imitate. Hopeless of ever attempting any such work himself, he would only look at the horse of Trajan, placed in the middle of the vestibule[1] and bearing the statue of the Emperor. "That," said Constantius, "I can imitate, and I will." Hormisdas, a royal refugee from the court of Persia, replied, with his nation's quickness of repartee, "But first, O Emperor, if you can do so, order a stable to be built as fair as that before us, that your horse may have as fine an exercising ground as the one we are now looking upon."'

Via Lata.

Emerging from the imperial Fora, Procopius would now enter upon the Via Lata, broad as its name denotes, one of the longest streets, if not the longest, in Rome, and very nearly corresponding to the modern Corso. The Subura, which lay a little to the east of the Forum of Augustus, was once at any rate one of the most thickly peopled districts of Rome, and we shall perhaps not be wrong in assuming that in the regions east of the Via Lata, upon the Quirinal, Viminal, and Esquiline Hills, where the tall buildings of the Fourth Rome, the Rome of Victor Emmanuel and United Italy, are now arising, the humbler classes of the Second or Imperial Rome had chiefly fixed their abodes.

On the left side of the Via Lata, where the Third or Papal Rome has spun its web of streets thickest, all or nearly all was yet given up to pleasure. This was the true West End of Rome, the region in which

[1] Atrium.

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Campus Martius, circuses, and theatres west of the Via Lata.

her parks and theatres were chiefly placed. Here were the great open spaces of the Campus Martius and Campus Flaminius; here two race-courses, those of Flaminius and Domitian; here the great theatres of Pompey, of Balbus, and of Marcellus, and the Porticoes of the Argonauts and of Octavia. Altogether it was a region devoted to pleasure and idleness by the side of the tawny Tiber, and most unlike the closely-built and somewhat dingy quarters of the city which now occupy it.

Pantheon.

As Procopius moved along the straight course of the Via Lata his eye would probably be caught by the flat dome of the Pantheon of Agrippa, hovering over the buildings on his left[1]. He would thread the Arch of Claudius, would stand at the foot of the Column of Marcus Aurelius, and then pass beneath that Emperor's Arch of Triumph. Two mighty sepulchres would then arrest his attention: the Tomb of Hadrian[2] seeming by its massive bulk almost close at hand, though on the other bank of the Tiber; and the Mausoleum of Augustus rising immediately on his left, a rotunda of white marble below, a green and shady pleasaunce above, recalling, by its wonderful admixture of Nature and Art, the far-famed Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Tomb of Hadrian.

Mausoleum of Augustus.

And now at length his never-to-be-forgotten first view of Rome was drawing to a close. The soon-sinking sun of late autumn warned him, perchance, to quicken his pace. He bore off to the right: by some steep steps where the receivers of the public alimony[3]

[1] 'Pantheum velut regionem teretem speciosa celsitudine fornicatam' (Ammianus, xvi. 10. 14).

[2] Now the Castle of S. Angelo.

[3] Panis gradilis.

were wont to cluster, he climbed the high garden-decked Pincian. He entered the palace, bowed low before Belisarius, lower yet before the imperious Antonina, and received the General's orders as to the share of work that he was to undertake in connection with the provisionment of the city. Such is an account, imaginary indeed, but not improbable, of the circumstances in which the soldier-secretary first entered and first beheld Rome reunited to the Roman Empire.

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Christian buildings of Rome.

It remains for us briefly to notice the rising importance of the Christian buildings of Rome, though we will here dispense with the imaginary companionship of Procopius, whose somewhat sceptical temper, 'well acquainted with the subjects in dispute among Christians, but determined to say as little as possible about them, holding it to be proof of a madman's folly to enquire into the nature of God[1],' would make him an uncongenial guest at the sacred shrines. Of the five great patriarchal churches of Rome, three were beyond the walls of the city. On its extreme verge stood what was still the foremost in dignity of all the five, St. John Lateran, or the Basilica of Constantine, the so-called Mother-Church of Christendom, 'Omnium Urbis et Orbis Ecclesiarum Caput.' It stood near the Asinarian Gate, on the property which Fausta, the unhappy wife of Constantine, inherited from her father Maximian, and which had once belonged to the senatorial family of the Laterani; and it formed the subject of that real and considerable donation of the first Christian Emperor to the Bishops of Rome which later ages distorted into a quasi-feudal investiture of the Imperial City.

Basilica of Constantine: St. John Lateran.

[1] De Bello Gotthico, i. 3.

BOOK V. CH. 4. 536. Vatican Basilica: St. Peter's.

Upon the Vatican Hill, outside the walls of Aurelian, looking down upon the Tiber and the Tomb of Hadrian, rose the five long aisles, the semicircular apse, and the nearly square entrance-Atrium of the Basilica of St. Peter. The region immediately surrounding it was perhaps still called the Gardens of Nero. It is certain that the reason for placing the Basilica on that spot was that there was the traditional site of the martyrdom of the Apostle, as well as of the sufferings of the nameless Christian crowd who, dressed in cloaks covered with pitch and set on fire, served as living torches to light that throned Satan to his revels and his chariot-races on the Vatican-mount.

St. Paul's.

Outside the gate of Ostia, and also near the traditional scene of the martyrdom of the Apostle to whom it was dedicated, stood the noble Basilica of St. Paul. This edifice, commenced by Theodosius, completed by Honorius, and having received the finishing touches to its decorations at the hand of Placidia under the guidance of Pope Leo[1], subsisted with but little change to the days of our fathers. The lamentable fire of 1823, by which the greater part of it was destroyed, took from us the most interesting relic of Christian Imperial Rome. Happily the restoration, though it cannot give us back the undiminished interest of the earlier building, has been executed with admirable fidelity to the original design.

Liberian Basilica: Sta. Maria Maggiore.

This cannot be said of the Liberian Basilica, the great church now known as S. Maria Maggiore, which, standing high on the Esquiline Hill, looked down

[1] 'Placidiae pia mens operis decus *h*omne (sic) paterni
Gaudet pontificis studio splendere Leonis.'
(Inscription over the arch in S. Paolo fuori le Mura.)

westwards on the crowded Subura, and northwards towards the palatial Baths of Diocletian. The outside of the building has sustained the extremity of insult and wrong at the hands of the tasteless pseudo-classical restorers of the eighteenth century; and the inside, though not absolutely ruined by them, though its mosaics are still visible and much of its long colonnade still remains, shows too plainly how unsafe were the treasures of Christian antiquity in the hands of the conceited architects of the Renaissance.

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St. Lawrence.

The last of the great Basilicas, that of the martyred St. Lawrence, one mile outside the Tiburtine Gate, has suffered less ravage at the hands of restorers. It was in the thirteenth century singularly re-arranged and transformed, its apse being pulled down and turned into a nave, and its original vestibule being turned into a choir[1]: still we have substantially before us the same church which was surrounded by the Gothic armies in their siege of Rome. With that blending of the old and of the very new which at once charms and bewilders the visitor to Rome, we have here again an inscription recording the work of 'the pious mind of Placidia' under the guidance of Attila's Pope Leo, and in the crypt the just erected tomb of Pio Nono. The latter is so placed as to command a view of the slab of marble dyed red with the blood of the deacon Laurentius, martyr for the faith under the Emperor Claudius Gothicus. This marble slab was a favourite relic with the late Pontiff.

The parish churches, or Tituli.

Besides these five great patriarchal churches there were twenty-eight parish churches, known by the

[1] See Freeman's Historical and Architectural Sketches, 213–215, for an account of these transformations.

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technical name of *Tituli*, from which the Cardinal-presbyters of a later age took their ecclesiastical designations[1]. Some of these which have been preserved to this day are more interesting than the churches of greater dignity, having by reason of their comparative insignificance escaped the hand of the Renaissance destroyer[2].

Chief features of the ecclesiastical architecture of the fifth and sixth centuries.

The main features, which were evidently common to all the Christian edifices of Rome in the fifth and sixth centuries, were (1) a long line of columns, not by any means always uniform or of the same order of architecture, and generally taken from the outside of some heathen temple; (2) a semicircular apse at the eastern end, in which the bishop or presbyter sat surrounded by his inferior clergy, as the Roman magistrate in the original Basilica sat surrounded by the various members of his 'officium;' (3) an arch in front of the apse, the idea of which was probably borrowed from the triumphal arches of the Emperors; (4) upon the arch, upon the apse, on the flat wall-space above the arches, in fact wherever they could conveniently be introduced, a blaze of bright mosaics, like those still preserved to us at Ravenna and in a very few of these Roman churches. The subjects represented were the Saviour, the symbols of the four Evangelists, the twelve Apostles under the guise of sheep, the mystic cities Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the Jordan and the four rivers of Paradise, and other emblems of the same character.

The fact that the columns of these churches were

[1] See a very complete list of the Tituli in Gregorovius, i. 251–259.

[2] Such are Santa Prassede, San Clemente, and Santa Agnese.

as a rule taken from heathen temples must of course qualify to some extent the statement that the splendour of the city was undiminished when Procopius entered it. Temples, not merely abandoned to silence and solitude, but rudely stripped of their pillared magnificence, must in many places have offended the eye of a beholder more sensitive to beauty than to religious enthusiasm. Still upon the whole, and with this abatement, we may repeat our proposition that it was the stately Rome of Consuls and Emperors which men then looked upon, and which after the middle of the sixth century they never beheld again.

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'Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free.'

CHAPTER V.

THE LONG SIEGE BEGUN.

Authority.

Source:—

BOOK V. Ch. 5.

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, i. 16–19.

536.

Vacillation of Witigis.

VACILLATION and feebleness of purpose marked the counsels of Witigis, as the consequences of the fatal error which he had committed in abandoning Rome made themselves manifest to his mind. At first his chief desire was to wait till his forces should be strengthened by the return of Marcias with the considerable army which he had under his command for the defence of Gothic Gaul against the Franks. Then came tidings which showed that Belisarius felt his hold of Rome so secure that he might venture onwards into the Tuscan province. Bessas was sent to Narni, about fifty miles from Rome, the first strong position on the Flaminian Way. The inhabitants being well affected to the imperial cause, he occupied this post without difficulty. Constantine, the rival of Bessas in martial glory, was sent with some of the body-guards of Belisarius, and other troops, among whom figured several Huns[1], in order to seize some positions yet further from the city. Spoleto, twenty-five miles

Energy of Belisarius.

Occupation of Narni.

[1] The barbaric-sounding names of the Hunnish generals are Zanter, Chorsoman, and Aeschman.

further from Rome on the Flaminian Way, was occupied by a garrison. Etrurian Perugia on her lofty hill-top, some forty miles further north than Spoleto, but lying a little off the great Flaminian highway, was next taken possession of, and here Constantine fixed his head-quarters. The troops which Witigis despatched against Perugia were defeated, and their generals [1] were sent as prisoners to Rome.

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Spoleto, and Perugia.

The tidings of these reverses roused Witigis to more vigorous action; but, strangely enough, after tarrying so long in order to be joined by the recalled troops from Gaul, he must now weaken himself still further by sending a division into Dalmatia. It is true that of the two generals despatched on this errand, one, Asinarius, was sent round the head of the Hadriatic Gulf, to gather round his standard the barbarians who dwelt in the districts which we now call Carniola and Croatia. But the other, Uligisal, who sailed straight to Dalmatia, must have taken with him some troops who could be ill-spared from the defence of Italy. It is not necessary to trouble the reader with the details of these ill-advised, and in the end resultless, operations on the east of the Hadriatic. The Goths met with reverses [2], but succeeded for some time in closely investing Salona both by sea and land [3]. The Dalmatian capital, however, fell not; and after a siege of uncertain duration, the Gothic soldiers probably re-

Gothic operations in Dalmatia.

[1] Unilas and a second Pitzas (not of course the commander in Samnium who went over to Belisarius).

[2] Uligisal was defeated at Scardona and shut up in Burnum, but liberated by the arrival of his colleague Asinarius.

[3] It is interesting to note the tactics of besiegers and besieged. Constantian had surrounded Salona with a deep ditch. The Goths surrounded this ditch again with a high mound.

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crossed the Hadriatic to take part in the more urgent work of resisting Belisarius in Italy[1].

537. Tidings of Roman disaffection to the Imperial cause.

About this time word was brought to the Gothic King that the citizens of Rome viewed with impatience the presence and the exactions of the Imperial army. That there was some foundation of truth for this statement will appear by a reference to the last chapter; but it was evidently much exaggerated, and it by no means followed that the citizens who grumbled the most bitterly at the general's preparations for the siege would lift a finger for the surrender of the city to the justly enraged Gothic army. However, the tidings kindled immediately a flame of hope in the feebly forecasting soul of Witigis: and now he, who had wasted precious months in purposeless inaction, thought every day an age till he had recovered possession of the abandoned city. With the whole armed nation of the Goths (except the division that had been ordered to Dalmatia) he marched southwards in hot haste along the Flaminian Way. The numbers of his army amounted, if we trust the estimate of Procopius, to 150,000 men. The historian evidently uses round numbers, and has probably exaggerated the size of the besieging host in order to increase the fame of Belisarius; but there can be no doubt that Witigis was followed by a very large army, out-numbering many times over the little band of the Imperialists. The proportions of infantry and cavalry are not stated, but we are told that the greater number, both of the horses and men, were completely encased in defensive armour[2].

Wigitis marches southwards with 150,000 men.

[1] Procopius appears to have forgotten to tell us the sequel of the Dalmatian war.

[2] Καὶ αὐτῶν τεθωρακισμένοι ξὺν τοῖς ἵπποις οἱ πλεῖστοι ἦσαν (De

Once started on his march, Witigis was tormented by a fond fear that Belisarius would escape him, and was earnest in his prayers by night and by day that he might behold the walls of Rome while yet the Imperial forces stood behind them. On the journey the army fell in with a priest who had just quitted the city, and who was brought with shouts to the King's tent. 'Is Belisarius yet in Rome?' asked Witigis, breathless with anxiety. 'Ay, and likely to remain there,' was the answer of the priest, who had a better idea of the state of the game than his questioner.

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Eagerness of Witigis.

Still, the Imperial general was for a moment perplexed by the tidings that so vast a host was rolling on towards him. It was not for his own position that he was in fear, but he felt that he could scarcely hold the latest conquests in Tuscany in the face of such an army. After some anxious deliberation he ordered Constantine and Bessas to garrison three towns only, and then to fall back on Rome. The three towns were Spoleto, Perugia, and Narni; all situated on the top of high hills, and therefore easily defended. Narni especially, built on

Belisarius concentrates his forces.

'that grey crag where girt with towers
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar,'

B. G. i. 16). From the mention of the horses we may probably infer that they wore suits of flexible chain armour. Compare the remarks of the young lady in Claudian's poem on the sixth consulship of Honorius (569–572):—

'Ut chalybem indutos equites, et in aere latentes
Vidit cornipedes: "Quanam de gente" rogabat
"Ferrati venere viri? Quae terra metallo
Nascentes informat equos?"'

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and commanding the entrance to a deep and picturesque gorge spanned by the stately bridge of Augustus (one of whose arches still remains), struck the mind of the historian by the grand inaccessibility of its position [1]. Bessas, who lingered somewhat over the execution of the orders of his chief, had the excitement of a successful skirmish with the vanguard of the Gothic army before he retired from this fortress to Rome.

Skirmish at Narni.

Witigis at the Milvian Bridge.

Notwithstanding the fact that these strongholds were in the possession of the enemy, Witigis appears to have pushed on by the Flaminian Way which winds at their feet; and was soon standing with his 150,000 men at the Etrurian end of the Milvian Bridge over the Tiber, two miles from Rome [2]. This bridge, so

[1] 'This bridge Caesar Augustus built in the times long ago, a sight about which much might be said. For of all the arches that we know this is the loftiest' (De B. G. i. 17). The remaining arch is 60 feet high and about 30 feet broad.

[2] I follow Gibbon, and almost all other historians who have described this march of the Goths, in interpreting Procopius' 'bridge over the Tiber at 14 stadia from Rome' by the Milvian Bridge. Gregorovius, however, points out (i. 349, n. 1) that if Witigis marched, as Procopius says he did, 'through the Sabine territory' (διὰ Σαβίνων τὴν πορείαν ποιούμενος), he would be on the east bank of the Tiber and would not need to cross that river at all. He therefore suggests that Procopius has here as elsewhere confused the Tiber with the Anio, and that we must understand by his words one of the bridges over the latter stream, probably the Ponte Salaro, which is about the right distance from Rome. I do not think, however, that this bridge corresponds with the description of the battle nearly so well as the Milvian. As we must admit some inaccuracy in Procopius, I prefer to sacrifice the words διὰ Σαβίνων rather than the words Τιβέριδος ποταμοῦ γεφύρᾳ. It is not necessary to admit that the large army of the Goths would be prevented, by the hostile occupation of Spoleto and Narni, from using the broad and convenient *Via Flaminia*. The view usually taken receives further confirmation from the fact

well known under its modern name of Ponte Molle to the fashionable loungers in Rome, is in its present shape the handiwork of Papal architects; but the foundations of the piers are ancient, and the general appearance of the six arches with which it spans the stream is probably not very different from that which it wore in the days of Belisarius. A bridge whose name had often been in the mouths of the Roman people in stirring times, in the crises of Punic wars and Catilinarian conspiracies, it had earned yet greater fame two centuries ago (A. D. 312) by the bloody battle fought under its parapets between the soldiers of Constantine and those of Maxentius, a battle the result of which ensured the triumph of Christianity through the whole Roman world, and which has been for this reason commemorated by Raffaele and Romano with splendid strength in the Stanze of the Vatican.

Belisarius's preparations for the defence of the bridge.

Expecting that the Goths would attempt to cross the river here, and anxious to retard their progress [1], though without hope of finally preventing them from reaching the eastern bank of the river, Belisarius had

that in the 19th chapter (p. 94) Procopius mentions the bridge ἣ Μιλβίου ἐπώνυμός ἐστιν as in the possession of the Goths, and essential to the combined operations of their army on the two banks of the river. He gives no hint that this is not the same bridge which they wrested from the soldiers of Belisarius at the commencement of the siege.

[1] But Procopius must surely be mistaken in saying that any other route than that by the bridge which they stormed would cause them a delay of twenty days. Doubtless they could have crossed by the bridge near Borghetto, about thirty-six miles from Rome. This assertion, however, makes it more probable that Procopius is really thinking of the Milvian Bridge than of the little bridges over the Anio.

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erected a fortress on the Etrurian bank, and decided to pitch his camp close to the stream on the Latian side, in order to over-awe the barbarians by this show of confidence. And, indeed, the ardour of the Goths was not a little chilled when they saw the castle above, and the tawny river before them. They bivouacked between Monte Mario and the Tiber for the night, postponing till the morrow the assault on the bridge-fort. The night, however, brought gloomy forebodings to other hearts than theirs. It seemed to the garrison impossible that the bridge could be effectually defended against that vast horde of men whose camp-fires filled the plain. Twenty-two soldiers of the Roman army, themselves of barbarian origin, horsemen in the troop of Innocentius, went over to the foes and informed them of the state of discouragement which prevailed in the garrison. As night wore on, the rest of the men on duty in the bridge-fort deserted their post. They did not dare to show themselves in Rome, but slunk away to Campania. When day dawned the Goths marched without difficulty through the empty guard-house, across the undefended bridge, and now they stood on the eastern bank of the Tiber with no natural obstacle between them and Rome.

The bridge-fort deserted by its defenders.

Little dreaming of the cowardice of the garrison, Belisarius, who thought the barbarians were still on the other side of the river, sent 1000 picked horsemen to the bridge-end to reconnoitre for a suitable camping-ground. They fell in with a party of the Gothic horsemen who had just crossed the bridge, and an equestrian battle followed. Then, says the historian, Belisarius forgot for a moment the discretion which ought

Skirmish at the eastern end of the bridge.

to be manifested by a general, and by exposing himself like a common soldier brought the Imperial cause into the extremest peril. Springing upon his charger he hurried to the place whence the clash of arms was heard, and was soon in the thickest of the fight. His horse, a noble creature, which did everything that a horse could do to carry its rider harmless through the fray, was well known to all the army. Dark-roan[1], with a white star upon its forehead, it was called by the Greeks Phalius[2], and by the barbarians in the army Balan[3]. The deserters knew the steed and his rider, and strove to direct the weapons of the Goths against them. 'Balan! Balan! Aim for the horse with the white star,' was their eager exclamation. The cry was caught up by the Goths, scarce one of whom understood its meaning. But they knew that the horse with the white star must carry some personage of importance: and 'Balan! Balan!' resounded from a thousand Gothic throats through the confused roar of the battle. All their bravest thronged to the place, some with lances, some with swords, striving to transfix or to hew down the horse and his rider. To right, to left, Belisarius dealt his swashing blows. The best men of his body-guard gathered round him, some protecting his body and that of his horse with their shields, others thrusting back the onset of the barbarians by impetuous counter-charges. It was a true Homeric battle, in which all that was most martial in the two armies was drawn to a single point, and on

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Belisarius in the battle.

[1] φαιός.

[2] The Greek word for an animal with a white patch on its forehead.

[3] Is this a Hunnish word, or (more probably) the equivalent of Phalius on barbarian lips?

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one group of fighting men rested the whole fortune of the day. At length Roman arms and Roman discipline prevailed. After a thousand Gothic warriors of the foremost rank and many of the bravest men of the Roman general's household had fallen, the barbarians fled to their camp[1], and Belisarius emerged absolutely unwounded from the fray.

Second fight nearer Rome.

When the fugitives reached the Gothic camp their comrades poured out in support of them. The Romans retreated to a hill near at hand, and here again a battle of cavalry took place, in which the deeds of greatest daring were wrought by a certain Valentine, who served in the humble capacity of groom to the son-in-law of Belisarius. Alone the brave menial charged an advancing squadron of the Goths, and rescued his comrades from imminent peril. The advance of the barbarians was, however, too strong to be resisted, and at length the whole Roman army, with Belisarius at their head, were in full flight to the walls of the city. They reached the Pincian Gate[2], which, from that memorable day, was long afterwards known by the name of the Gate of Belisarius. Down the sides of the fosse swarmed the

Flight of the Imperial troops.

[1] Which must have been hastily pitched on the east bank of the Tiber.

[2] The words of Procopius are, *ἀμφὶ τὴν πύλην ἣ Βελισαρία ὠνόμασται νῦν* (De B. G. i. 18). We seem to be forced, by the language of Procopius in the 22nd chapter, to understand by this the *Pincian* Gate, although Procopius is generally careful to speak of that as a *πυλίς*, not a *πύλη*. [But probably the whole discussion is caused by an error of the text. Three Vatican MSS., one of which, according to Comparetti, is the best of all the MSS. hitherto collated, read *ἀμφὶ τὴν πύλην ἣ Σαλαρία ὠνόμασται*. It will be well, therefore, to read above 'the Salarian' for 'the Pincian Gate.']

crowd of fugitives, but only to find to their despair the folding doors of the Porta Pinciana obstinately closed against them. The hoarse voice of Belisarius was heard, loudly and with threats calling to the sentinels to open the gate, but in vain. In that face, all covered with sweat, and dust and gore, they did not recognise, now that twilight was coming on, the countenance of the general whom they had so often seen serene in his hours of triumph: his voice they could not distinguish through the din of the refluent tide of war. Above all, the terrible rumour had reached their ears, brought by the first fugitives from the field, that Belisarius, after performing prodigies of valour, had been left dead upon the plain. This thought most of all unnerved them. They were left, it seemed, without a general and without a plan, and as they stooped forward from the round towers[1] by the gate, to see by the fading light how went the fortune of the fight, they felt themselves to be doomed men whose only chance of safety lay in keeping fast the doors by which, if opened, Goth and Roman would enter together.

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The gate closed against Belisarius.

This was the state of affairs, the Roman soldiers huddled together under the wall, so close to one another that they could hardly move, their comrades above refusing to open the gates, the Goths just preparing to rush down the fosse and make an exterminating charge, when the lost battle was retrieved by the wise rashness of Belisarius. Collecting his men into a small but orderly army he faced round and made a vigorous charge upon the pursuing Goths.

Belisarius charges the Goths.

[1] Still visible, though the gate itself is closed.

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Already thrown into disorder by the ardour of their pursuit, unable by the fading light to discern the small number of their foes, and naturally concluding that a new army was issuing from the gates of Rome to attack them, the barbarians turned and fled. Belisarius wisely pursued them but a short distance, re-formed his ranks, and marched back in good order to the gate, where he had now no difficulty in obtaining an entrance.

Brave deeds of Belisarius and Bandalarius.

Thus did the battle, which had commenced at dawn and lasted till dark, end after all not disastrously for the Imperial troops. By universal consent the praise of highest daring on that day was awarded to two men, to Belisarius on the side of the Romans, and on that of the barbarians to a man whom they called Wisandus Bandalarius, meaning perhaps thereby Bandalarius the Bison[1]. The latter was conspicuous in the thickest of the fight round Belisarius and the dark-roan steed, and it was not till he had received his thirteenth wound that he ceased from the combat. His victorious comrades saw and passed on from what they deemed to be the corpse of their champion; but three days after, when they came at their leisure to bury their dead, a soldier thought he saw signs of life in the body of Bandalarius and implored him to speak. Hunger and a raging thirst prevented him from doing more than make one gasping request for water. When that was brought him consciousness fully returned,

[1] This is the suggestion of Mr. Henry Bradley, in a letter to the 'Academy,' dated May 15, 1886. He thinks that the barbarian's name was probably Wandilaharis, and that the surname of Wisand, the Bison, was given him for his impetuous courage. Gibbon's rendering of Bandalarius as = a standard-bearer, he pronounces to be 'linguistically impossible.'

and he was able to be carried into the camp. He lived after this many years, having achieved great glory among his countrymen by his prowess and his narrow escape from death.

Belisarius's arrangements for the night.

For Belisarius, not even yet were the labours and anxieties of this long day ended. He mustered the soldiers and the greater part of the citizens upon the walls, and ordered them to kindle frequent fires along their circuit and to watch the whole night through. Then he went round the walls himself, arranging who was to be responsible for the defence of each portion, and especially which generals were to be on guard at each of the gates. While he was thus engaged, a messenger came in breathless haste from the Praenestine Gate[1] at the south-east of the city to say that Bessas, who was commanding there, had learned that the enemy were pouring in by the Gate of St. Pancratius[2] on the other side of the Tiber. Hearing this, the officers round him besought him to save himself and the army by marching out at some other gate. Unshaken by these disastrous tidings, Belisarius calmly said that he did not believe the report. A horseman, despatched with all speed to the Trastevere, returned with the welcome news that the enemy had not been seen in that part of the city. Belisarius improved the opportunity by issuing a general order that under no circumstances, not even if he heard that the Goths were inside the walls, was the officer entrusted with the defence of one gate to leave it in order to carry assistance to another. Each one was to attend to his own allotted portion of work and

False alarm of the Goths at the gate of St. Pancratius.

[1] Porta Maggiore.

[2] Still called Porta San Pancrazio.

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leave the care of the general defence to the commander-in-chief.

537. Harangue by Wacis.

The earnest work of the defence was interrupted by the comedy of a harangue from a Gothic chief named Wacis, who, by order of Witigis, drew near to the walls. With much vehemence he inveighed against the faithlessness of the Romans, who had betrayed their brave Gothic defenders and handed themselves over, instead, to the guardianship of a company of Greeks, men who had hitherto never been heard of in Italy except as play-actors, mimics, or vagabond sailors. Belisarius bade the men on the walls to treat this tirade with silent contempt: and in truth, after the deeds of that day, to revive the taunts which had passed current for centuries against Grecian effeminacy was an impertinence which refuted itself. None the less, however, did the Roman citizens marvel at and secretly condemn the calm confidence of success, the absolute contempt for his foe which was displayed on this occasion by Belisarius, so lately a fugitive from the Gothic sword. He understood the rules of the game, however, better than they, and having repaired the error of the morning, knew that no second opportunity of the same kind would be afforded by him to the enemy.

Belisarius takes his first refreshment.

And now, at last, when the night was already far advanced, was the general, who had fasted from early morning, prevailed on by his wife and friends to take some care for the refreshment of his body, hastily snatching a simple meal.

The Siege of Rome begun.

This memorable day was the beginning of the First Siege of Rome by the Ostrogoths, the longest and one of the deadliest that the Eternal City has ever

endured. It began in the early days of March 537, and was not to end till a year and nine days later in the March of 538[1]. When morning dawned, the Goths, who entertained no doubt of an early success against so large and helpless a city, proceeded to intrench themselves in seven camps, six on the eastern and one on the western side of the Tiber. They did not thus accomplish a perfect blockade of the city, but they did obstruct, in a tolerably effectual manner, eight out of its fourteen gates. As frequent reference in the course of this history will be made to one or other of these gates, it will be well to give a list of them here, with their ancient and modern names, printing those that were obstructed by the Goths in italics.

Gates of Rome.

To give some idea of the distance of one gate from another the number of square towers between each pair of gates is added on the authority of the Pilgrim of Einsiedeln. The intervals between the towers varied from 100 to 300 and even 400 feet, the wider spaces being chiefly found on the west side of the Tiber.

[1] Lord Mahon (Earl Stanhope), in his Life of Belisarius (p. 246), endeavours to fix the date of the beginning of the siege to March 12. He does this by assigning the vernal equinox (March 21) for its close. The words of Procopius, however (ii. 186, ed. Bonn), τὸ μὲν οὖν ἔτος ἀμφὶ τροπὰς ἐαρινὰς ἦν, seem to me too vague to support this exact conclusion: and, on the other hand, his statement that it began 'at the outset of March' (Μαρτίου ἱσταμένου ἡ πολιορκία κατ' ἀρχὰς γέγονεν, p. 117), coupled with the general course of the narrative which describes a large number of events before 'the winter ended and the second year of the war' (p. 154), indicates a very early date in March for the beginning of the siege. It does not seem possible to define it more accurately than this.

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537.

Ancient Name.	Modern Name.	No. of Towers.
East bank of the Tiber :—		
1. *Porta Flaminia* . . .	*P. del Popolo.*	
		51.
2. *Porta Salaria*	*P. Salara.*	
		10.
3. *Porta Nomentana* near to	*P. Pia.*	
		57.
4. *Porta Tiburtina* . . .	*P. San Lorenzo.*	
		19.
5. *Porta Praenestina* & 6. *Porta Labicana*	. *P. Maggiore.*	
		26.
7. Porta Asinaria.	near to P. San Giovanni.	
		20.
8. Porta Metrovia (or Metronia)	Closed.	
		20.
9. Porta Latina	Closed.	
		12.
10. Porta Appia.	P. San Sebastiano.	
		49.
11. Porta Ostiensis . . .	P. San Paolo.	
		35 to the Tiber.
		4.
West bank of the Tiber :—		
12. Porta Portuensis, near to	P. Portese.	
		29.
13. *Porta Aurelia*[1] (or *Sancti Pancratii*)	*P. San Pancrazio.*	
		24 to the Tiber.
		9.
14. *Porta Cornelia* (or *Sancti Petri*)	Destroyed (opposite Ponte S. Angelò).	
		16.
		381.

Between the Flaminian and the Salarian gates stood the somewhat smaller Porta Pinciana, now closed, which was the scene of some hot encounters during the siege. It is possible that Procopius may have reckoned the Porta Pinciana as one of the fourteen

[1] There is some little confusion about the application of the term Porta Aurelia. It seems clear that Procopius uses it of Gate No. 14, opposite the Tomb of Hadrian (Castle of S. Angelo), and equally clear that both in earlier and in later times No. 13 was known as Aurelia. Procopius knows the latter only by its ecclesiastical name, Porta Sancti Pancratii. Either there were two Portae Aureliae, or the memory of the historian, writing as he did some thirteen years after his visit to Rome, has played him false.

gates belonging to the whole circuit of the walls, and one of the six gates on the eastern side of the Tiber that were blocked by the enemy. In that case we must treat the Labicana and Praenestina as one gate, which their close proximity to one another justifies us in doing. It seems more probable, however, that Procopius, who is generally very careful to denote the Pincian by the term gate-let (πυλίς), and who informs us that there were fourteen gates 'besides certain gate-lets[1],' did not mean to reckon the Pincian among the great gates of Rome.

Total extent of the walls.

The total circuit of the walls of Aurelian and Honorius was about twelve miles. The space blockaded by the Goths amounted probably to about two-thirds of this circumference.

The seven Gothic camps.

The camps of the barbarians were works of some solidity. Deep fosses were dug around them: the earth dug out of the fosse was piled on its inner face so as to make a high rampart, and a fence of sharp stakes was inserted therein. Altogether, as Procopius says, these Gothic camps lacked none of the defences of a regular castle. A careful observer (Mr. Parker), who has had the advantage of several years' residence in Rome, considers that the traces of all these camps are still visible. Without venturing to pronounce an opinion on a question requiring such minute local knowledge, it will not be amiss to place before the reader the result of his investigations. In any event the Gothic camps must have been near the sites which he has assigned to them.

First camp.

The first camp was placed 'within a stone's throw

[1] Ἔχει μὲν τῆς πόλεως ὁ περίβολος δὶς ἑπτὰ πύλας καὶ πυλίδας τινάς (De B. G. i. 19).

BOOK V. Ch. 5. 537. of the Porta Flaminia (to the north-east), in the grounds which formerly belonged to the villa of the Domitii [1].' This camp was obviously required in order to obstruct the great northern road of Rome and to threaten the gate leading to it.

Second camp. The second, probably the largest and most important of all, was erected in what are now the gardens of the Villa Borghese. The woods and shady coverts of this, which is one of the most beautiful of the parks surrounding the walls of Rome, make it now very difficult to get a clear view of the ground and to reconstruct in imagination the scene of so many terrible encounters. Still it is possible to behold the quickly-rising ground on which the camp was placed. 'The raised platform for the tents to stand upon' (one of these tents was probably the royal pavilion of Witigis) 'and the cliffs around it are' (says Mr. Parker) 'very visible.' Clearly seen from it were doubtless the high walls of the city, the Pincian gate-let, and the Pincian gardens surrounding the palace in which Belisarius dwelt.

Third camp. The third camp, 'concealed from view by modern walls,' says Parker, 'lay on the left hand of the Via Nomentana, about half-way (or rather less) to the ancient church of 'St. Agnes outside the walls.'

Fourth and fifth camps. Rounding the sharp projecting angle of the Castra Praetoria we come to two camps, the fourth and fifth, one on the north and one on the south of the Via Tiburtina. The fifth, says Parker, 'is very near to the great church and burial-ground of St. Laurence outside the walls, from which the cliffs of it are distinctly seen.' The fourth is apparently placed by

[1] Which, when Mr. Parker wrote, belonged to Mr. Esmeade.

him only about a couple of hundred yards away near the Villa Santo Spirito. It may perhaps be doubted whether Parker is right in putting these two camps so near to one another.

Sixth camp.

The sixth, and last on this side of the river, is placed about half-a-mile from the south-eastern corner of the walls along the Via Praenestina.

Seventh camp.

On the other side of the Tiber the Goths built a camp to assure their hold upon the Milvian Bridge and to threaten the gates of St. Peter and St. Pancratius. We are told that it was in the Campus Neronis. It must have been therefore not far from where the Vatican palace now stands: but after the vast changes which the Popes, from the fifteenth century onwards, have made in that region, it would be futile now to look for its remains[1]. Marcias, who had by this time arrived with the troops from Gaul, took the command of this trans-Tiberine camp. A Gothic officer was placed in charge of each of the other camps, Witigis having a general oversight of all on the east of the Tiber and the particular oversight of one, which, as has been before said, was probably that in the Borghese gardens[2].

On the Roman side Belisarius himself took the command of the portion of the wall between the Pincian gate-let and the Salarian gate; the part which was considered least secure, and where the Roman opportunities for a sally were the most inviting.

[1] I venture to differ here from Mr. Parker, who places this camp close to the Ponte Molle and just at the foot of Monte Mario, where he thinks remains of it are still visible.

[2] Procopius is rather vague here: Τῶν δὲ ἄλλων Οὐίτιγις ἡγεῖτο ἕκτος αὐτός. Ἄρχων γὰρ ἦν εἶς κατὰ χαράκωμα ἕκαστον (De B. G. i. 19).

BOOK V. CH. 5. 537. The Praenestine Gate (Maggiore) was assigned to Bessas, the Flaminia (P. del Popolo) to Constantine. The last-named gate was blocked up with large stones (perhaps taken from the old wall of King Servius), so that it might not be possible for traitors to open it to the enemy. For, on account of the close proximity of the first Gothic camp, a surprise at this gate was considered more probable than at any other.

The building of the seven camps of the barbarians was a temporary expedient, and when the war was over the traces of them, except for the eye of an archaeologist, soon passed away. Not so, however, with the next operation resorted to by the Goths, which may be said to have influenced the social life of Rome, and through Rome the social life of the kingdoms of Western Europe, throughout the ten centuries which we call the Middle Ages. This operation was the cutting of the Aqueducts. A deed of such far-reaching importance requires to be treated of in a chapter by itself; nor will the reader possibly object to turn for a little space from the tale of barbarous battle to the story of the wise forethought of 'the Romans of ancient days,' the builders of the mighty water-courses which fed the Eternal City.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CUTTING OF THE AQUEDUCTS.

Authorities.

Sources:—

The chief authority for the history of the Roman Aqueducts is SEXTUS JULIUS FRONTINUS (cir. A.D. 97) in his two books *De Aquaeductibus Urbis Romae.* I have used chiefly Dederich's edition in the Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig, 1855).

Guides:—

The admirable monograph of the Commendatore *R. Lanciani*, 'Le Acque e gli Acquedotti di Roma Antica' (Rome, 1880), has superseded the treatise of *Fabretti*, valuable as that was in its day, and will probably now be always the standard work of reference on this subject. An English student may also express his gratitude for the assistance afforded by *J. H. Parker's* volume, 'The Aqueducts' (Oxford, 1876). The existing information on the subject is well summarised by *H. Jordan*, 'Topographie der Stadt Rom,' i. 452–480.

A traveller's view of the Aqueducts of Rome.

THE least observant visitor to Rome is awed and impressed by the ruins of the Aqueducts. As he stands on the top of the Colosseum, or as he is carried swiftly past them on the railway to Naples, he sees their long arcades stretching away in endless perspective across the monotonous Campagna, and, ignorant perhaps of the valuable service which some of them yet render to the water-supply of Rome, he is only touched and saddened by the sight of so much wasted

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labour, by the ever-recurring thought of the nothingness of man. But when he comes to enquire a little more closely into the history of these wonderful structures, he finds, not only that the ignorance of scientific principles to which it was once the fashion to attribute their origin, did not exist; not only that the Popes of later days have succeeded in restoring a few of them so as to make them practically useful in quenching the thirst of the modern Roman: but also that the aqueducts have a curious and interesting history of their own which admirably illustrates the life and progress of the great Republic. As her fortunes mounted, so the arches rose, higher and higher. As her dominion extended, so those mighty filaments stretched further and further up into the hills. Like a hand upon the clock-face of Empire was the ever-rising level of the water-supply of Rome.

Water-supply of Rome before the aqueducts were built, B.C. 754 to 312.

For four hundred and forty-two years, that is during the whole period of the Kings and for the first two centuries of the Republic, the Romans were satisfied with such water as they could obtain from the tawny Tiber; from the wells, of which there was a considerable number; from the upspringing fountains, many of which were the objects of a simple religious worship; and from the cisterns in which they collected the not very abundant rain-fall.

APPIA, B.C. 312.

At length, in the year 312 B.C., when the Second Samnite War was verging towards its successful conclusion, the great Censor Appius Claudius bestowed upon Rome her first great road and her first aqueduct, both known through all after ages by his name[1]. He

[1] Though Appius Claudius received the whole honour of the work, Frontinus hints that he was not solely entitled to it. His

went for his water-supply seven miles along the road to Palestrina, to a spot now called La Rustica, about half way between Rome and the hills, and hence, by a circuitous underground channel more than eleven miles long, he brought the water to the city. Not till it got to the Porta Capena, one of the old gates of the city on its southern side, did it emerge into the light of day, and then it was carried along arches only for the space of sixty paces. Thus, according to our modern use of the term, it might be considered as rather a conduit than an aqueduct. It has been remarked upon as an interesting fact that Appius Claudius, the first Roman author in verse and prose, the first considerable student of Greek literature, was also the first statesman to take thought for the water-supply of Rome. And further, that he whose censorship was marked by a singular coalition between the haughtiest of the aristocracy and the lowest of the commons, and who was suspected of aiming at the tyranny by the aid of the latter class, carried the water to that which was not only physically but socially one of the lowest quarters of Rome, the humble dwellings between the Aventine and the Caelian hills [1].

colleague in the Censorship, C. Plautius, obtained the surname Venox by reason of his persistent search after *veins* of water. Finding that Appius was not taking his fair share of this work he resigned office, after he had held it eighteen months. Appius availed himself of the discoveries of Venox, and by fair means or foul clung to office till the aqueduct was finished.

[1] 'When we remember,' says Dr. Arnold (Hist. of Rome, ii. 289), 'that this part of Rome was particularly inhabited by the poorest citizens, we may suspect that Appius wished to repay the support which he had already received from them, or to purchase its continuance for the time to come: but we shall feel unmixed pleasure in observing that the first Roman aqueduct was

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ANIO VETUS, B.C. 272.

Forty years later, a much bolder enterprise in hydraulics was successfully attempted, when the stream afterwards known as the *Anio Vetus* was brought into the city by a course of 43 miles, at a level of 147 feet above the sea, or nearly 100 feet higher than the Aqua Appia[1]. The last public act of the blind old Appius Claudius (the builder of the first

B.C. 280.

aqueduct) had been to adjure the Roman Senate to listen to no proposals of peace from King Pyrrhus so long as a single Epirote soldier remained on the soil of

B.C. 272 to 270

Italy. Eight years later, when the war with Pyrrhus had been triumphantly concluded, Manius Curius, the hero of that war, signalised his censorship by beginning to build the second aqueduct, the spoils won in battle from the King of Epirus furnishing the pay of the workmen engaged in the operation. He died before the work was finished, and the glory of completing it belonged to Fulvius Flaccus, created with him 'duumvir for bringing the water to Rome[2].'

This time the hydraulic engineers went further afield for the source of their supply. They looked across the Campagna to the dim hills of Tivoli—

'To the green steeps whence Anio leaps
In sheets of snow-white foam,'—

and daringly determined to bring the river Anio himself, or at least a considerable portion of his waters, to Rome. At a point about ten miles above Tivoli, near

constructed for the benefit of the poor and of those who most needed it.'

[1] Lanciani (p. 49) gives to the Anio Vetus at its entry into Rome 45·40 metres, 'di altezza assoluta.' To the Appia (p. 40) 15 metres. It is true that this is at the *mouth* of the Appia.'

[2] 'Duumvir aquae perducendae.'

the mountain of S. Cosimato, the river was tapped. The water which was drawn from it was carried through tunnels in the rock, and by a generally subterranean course, till, after a journey as before stated of forty-three miles, it entered Rome just at the level of the ground, but at a point (the Porta Maggiore) where that level was considerably higher than the place where the Appian water crept into the city.

MARCIA, B.C. 144.

Four generations passed before any further addition was made to the water-supply of Rome. Then, after the lapse of 128 years, the Marcian water, best of all the potable waters of Rome, was introduced into the city by the first aqueduct, in the common acceptation of the term, the first channel carried visibly above ground on arches over long reaches of country. Its source was at thirty-eight miles from Rome in the upper valley of the Anio, between Tivoli and Subiaco. Here lay a tranquil pool of water emerging from a natural grotto and of a deep green colour, whence came the liquid treasure of the Marcia. The changes in the conformation of the valley make it difficult to identify the spot with certainty, but it is thought that the furthest east of three springs known as the Acque Serene is probably the famous Marcia. From a spot close to this, the Marcia-Pia aqueduct, constructed by a company in our own days, and named after Pope Pius the Ninth, now brings water to the city. The original Marcian aqueduct was built B.C. 144, two years after the close of the Third Punic War, and the work was entrusted by the Senate, not this time to a Censor, but to the Praetor Urbanus, the highest judicial officer in Rome, who bore the name of

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Q. Marcius Rex. The aqueduct had a course of sixty-one miles, for seven of which it was carried upon arches, and it entered the city at 176 feet above the sea-level. The cost of its construction was 180 million sesterces[1], or nearly £1,600,000 sterling, and it carried water into the lofty Capitol itself, not without some opposition on the part of the Augurs, who, after an inspection of the Sibylline books, averred that only the water of the Anio, not that of any spring adjacent to it, might be brought into the temple of Jupiter.

TEPULA, B.C. 125.

Only nineteen years had elapsed, but years of continued conquest, especially in the Spanish peninsula, when in B.C. 125 another aqueduct, smaller, but at a slightly higher level, was added to the water-bringers of Rome. This was the *Aqua Tepula*, thirteen miles in length, of which only six were subterraneous, and entering Rome at a height of 184 feet above the sea-level. Servilius Caepio and Longinus Ravilla were the Censors to whom the execution of this work was entrusted. They resorted to a new source of supply, not utilising this time either springs or streams in the Anio valley, but journeying to the foot of the conical Alban Mount (Monte Cavo), which rises to the south-east of Rome, and there wooing the waters of the tepid[2] springs which bubbled up near the site of the modern village of Grotta Ferrata.

Another century passed, the century which saw the

[1] 'Legimus apud Fenestellam, in haec opera Marcio decretum sestertium milies octingenties' (Frontinus de Aquaeductibus, 7).

[2] This spring still shows a temperature of 61° (Fahrenheit) when the atmosphere is only 46°. The neighbouring Julia is only 50° at the same time. S. Lanciani appears to accept the suggestion that the name Tepula is derived from this circumstance.

rise of Marius, Sulla, and the mighty Julius. Absorbed in foreign war and the factions of the Forum, Rome had no leisure for great works of industry, and did not even preserve in good condition those which she already possessed. At length in the year B. C. 33, three years before the battle of Actium, M. Vipsanius Agrippa, the ablest of the ministers of Augustus, bestirred himself on behalf of the water-supply of the vastly expanded city. He restored the Appia, the Anio Vetus, and the Marcia, which had fallen into ruins, but he was not satisfied with mere reconstruction. The same hand which gave the Pantheon and its adjoining baths to the citizens of Rome gave them also two more aqueducts, the Julia (B. C. 33) and the Aqua Virgo (B. C. 19).

Agrippa as an aqueduct builder.

The *Julia* bore the name of its builder, who, himself of the plebeian Vipsanian gens, had been adopted, by reason of his marriage with the daughter of Augustus, into the high aristocratic family of the Caesars[1]. Its source was near that of the Tepula, but a little further from Rome. Apparently, in order that it might impart some of its fresh coolness to that tepid stream, its waters were first blended with it and then again divided into another channel, which flowed into Rome at an elevation four feet above the Tepula (188 feet above the sea-level). These two aqueducts, the Tepula and the Julia, are carried through the greater part of their course upon the same arcade with the Marcia.

JULIA, B.C. 33.

'Like friends once parted,
Grown single-hearted,
They plied their watery tasks.'

[1] By a somewhat singular fate, the name of Agrippa thus adopted into the Julian family is probably known most widely

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And, as a rule, wherever in the neighbourhood of Rome the *specus* (so the mason-wrought channel is termed) of the Marcia is descried, one sees also first the Tepula and then the Julia rising above it.

AQUA VIRGO, B.C. 19.

This work, however, did not end Agrippa's labours for the sanitary well-being of Rome. The Julia, though twice as large as the Tepula, was still one of the smaller contributors of water to the city. Fourteen years after its introduction Agrippa brought the *Aqua Virgo* into Rome. This splendid stream, three times as large as the Julia, was exceeded in size only by the Anio Vetus and the Marcia, among the then existing Aqueducts. To obtain it he went eight miles eastward of Rome, almost to the same spot where the great Censor had gathered the Aqua Appia. The Aqua Virgo derived its name from the story that when the soldiers of Agrippa were peering about to discover some new spring, a little maid pointed out to them a streamlet, which they followed up with the spade, thus soon finding themselves in presence of an immense volume of water. This story was commemorated by a picture in a little chapel built over the fountain.

The Virgo was not, like all the more recent aqueducts, brought into Rome at a high level. In fact it was only fifteen feet higher than the Appia, as might have been expected from the nearness of origin of the two streams. Its course is perfectly well known, as it is still bringing water to Rome, and is in truth that one of all the aqueducts which shows the most continuous record of useful service from ancient to modern

through *his* clients and complimentary namesakes, the two Agrippa-Herods of the Acts of the Apostles.

times. It comes by a pretty straight course, chiefly underground, till within about two miles of Rome; then it circles round the eastern wall of the city, winds through the Borghese gardens, creeps by a deep cutting through the Pincian hill, and enters Rome under what is now the Villa Medici. In old days it was carried on to the Campus Martius and filled the baths of its founder Agrippa. It still supplies many of the chief fountains of the city, especially the most famous of all, the Fountain of Trevi. When the stranger steps down in front of the blowing Tritons and takes his cup of water from the ample marble basin, drinking to his return to the Eternal City, he is in truth drinking to the memory of the wise Agrippa and of the little maid who pointed out the fountain to his legionaries.

ALSIETINA, A.D. 10 (?).

The contribution made by Augustus himself to the water-supply of Rome was a less worthy one than those of his son-in-law. 'What possible reason,' says Frontinus, 'could have induced Augustus, that most far-sighted prince, to bring the water of the Alsietine Lake, which is also called Aqua Augusta, to Rome I cannot tell. It has nothing to recommend it. It is hardly even wholesome, and it does not supply any considerable part of the population [because of the low level at which it enters the city]. I can only suppose that when he was constructing his Naumachia[1] he did not like to use the better class of water to fill his lake, and therefore brought this stream, granting all of it that he did not want himself to private persons

[1] A lake in the Trans-Tiberine region for the exhibition of sea-fights and other shows for which a large expanse of water was required.

for watering their gardens and similar purposes. However, as often as the bridges are under repair and there is a consequent interruption of the regular supply, this water is used for drinking purposes by the inhabitants of the Trans-Tiberine region.' So far Frontinus. The work was altogether of an inglorious kind. The quantity supplied was small, less even than that in the little Aqua Tepula. The quality, as has been stated, was poor, the source of supply being the turbid Lago di Martignano among the Etrurian hills on the north-west of Rome. And though it started at a pretty high level (680 feet above the sea), after a course of a little more than twenty-two miles it entered Rome on a lower plane than all the other aqueducts, lower even than the modest Appia, only about twenty-one feet above the level of the sea.

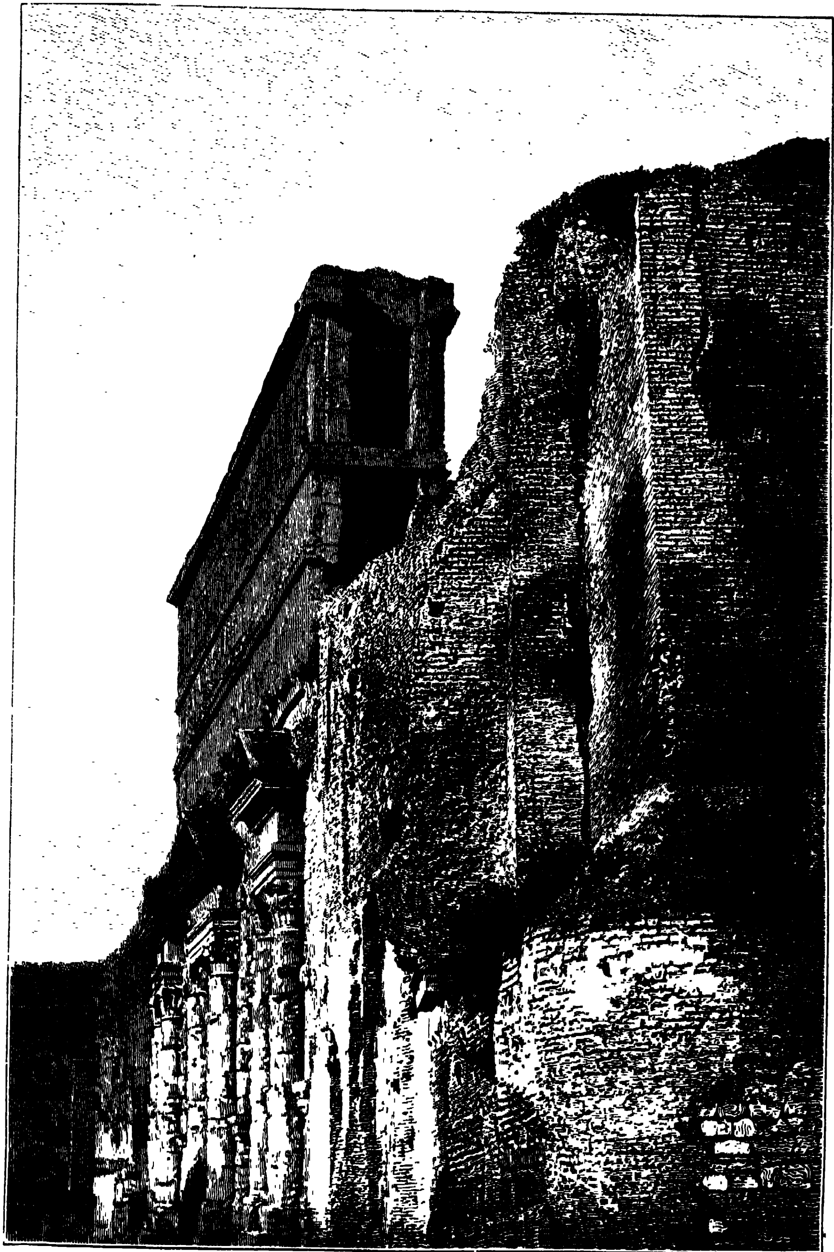
Caligula as an aqueduct builder.

The frenzied great-grandson of Augustus, the terrible Caligula, side by side with all his mad prodigality did accomplish great works for the water-supply of Rome.

CLAUDIA and ANIO NOVUS, A.D. 38 to 52.

He began, and his uncle Claudius finished, the two great aqueducts which closed the ascending series of Rome's artificial rivers, the Claudia and the Anio Novus. Thus by a singular coincidence the work which had been begun by a Claudius, the blind Censor of the fifth century of Rome, was crowned by another Claudius, not indeed a direct descendant, but a far distant scion, of the same haughty family, when the city was just entering upon her ninth century.

The two works, the Claudia and the Anio Novus, seem to have been proceeded with contemporaneously, and they travelled across the Campagna on the same stately series of arches, highest of all the arcades with whose ruins the traveller is familiar. They were, how-



SPECUS OF THE ANIO NOVUS AND AQUA CLAUDIA AS SEEN ABOVE THE PORTA MAGGIORE

From a Photograph in J. H. Parker's Series] [*To face page* 142, *Vol. IV*

ever, works of very different degrees of merit. The Claudia drew its waters from two fountains, the Caerulus and the Curtius, among the hills overhanging the Upper Anio, not many hundred yards away from the source of the Marcia[1]. And the water which it brought to the citizens of Rome was always considered second only in excellence to the Marcia itself.

The construction of the Anio Novus, on the other hand, was another of those unwise attempts of which one would have thought the hydraulic engineers of the city had had enough, to make the river Anio, that turbid and turbulent stream, minister meekly to the thirst of Rome. The water was taken out of the river itself from a higher point than the Anio Vetus, indeed four miles higher than the fountains of the Claudia, but that did not remedy the evil. The bad qualities of the Aqua Alsietina did little harm, beyond some occasional inconvenience to the inhabitants of the Trastevere, because it lay below all the other aqueducts. But of the thick and muddy Anio Novus, flowing above the other streams and mixing its contributions with theirs, like some tedious and loud-voiced talker, whenever they were least desired, of this provoking aqueduct a wearied Imperial water-director could only say, 'It ruins all the others[2].' The length of its journey to the city was more than fifty-eight miles, that of the Claudia more than forty-six, and the arcade upon which they together crossed the plain was six miles and four hundred and ninety-one paces

[1] Lanciani, who, as we have seen, identifies the source of the Marcia with the third of the Acque Serene, considers that the first and second 'Serene' were the sources of the Claudia.

[2] 'Alias omnes perdit' (Frontinus, xiii).

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in length. The Anio Novus entered the city two hundred and fourteen feet above the level of the sea, the Claudia nine feet lower.

TRAJANA, A.D. 109-110.

Thus were completed the nine great aqueducts of Rome; the aqueducts whose resources and machinery are copiously explained to us by the curator, Frontinus. Without troubling the reader with the names of some doubtful or obscure additions to the list, it must nevertheless be mentioned that the Emperor Trajan, in the year 109–110, intercepted some of the streams which fed the Sabatine Lake (Lago di Bracciano) and brought their water to Rome. His object was to provide potable water for the inhabitants of the Trastevere, who would only drink that supplied to them from the Alsietine Lake in case of extreme necessity. Trajan, however, did not fritter away the advantage of his high fountain-head as Augustus had done, but brought his aqueduct right over the hill of the Janiculum. Here in the days of Procopius its stream might be seen (till Witigis intercepted it) turning the wheels of a hundred mills. Here now its restored waters may be seen gushing in magnificent abundance through the three arches of Fontana on the high hill of S. Pietro in Montorio.

ALEXANDRINA, circa A.D. 226.

In the following century the excellent young Emperor Alexander Severus obtained a fresh supply from the neighbourhood of the old city of Gabii[1], about four miles south-east of the source of the Aqua Virgo. Little is known of the size or the course of the Aqua Alexandrina, whose chief interest for us is derived from the fact that it is practically the same aqueduct which was restored by the imperious old Pope, Sixtus V,

[1] 'Under La Colonna, the ancient Labicum' (Parker).

TABLE OF THE AQUEDUCTS OF FRONTINUS.

MILES.
65 metres. 60 metres. 50 metres. 40 metres. 30 metres. 20 metres. 10 metres. Sea level.

ANIO NOVVS (A. D. 52)
CLAVDIA (A. D. 52)
JVLIA (B. C. 33)
TEPVLA (B. C. 125)
MARCIA (B. C. 144)
ANIO VETVS (B. C. 272)
VIRGO (B. C. 19)
APPIA (B. C. 312)
ALSIETINA (A. D. 10)

The height at which the aqueducts entered Rome is given in metres (= 39 inches): the distance traversed by them from their source in Roman miles (= 1618 yards). It will be seen that no attempt is made to represent the gradient of the aqueducts. The proportion of the course above ground is indicated by a thick line. (This is conjectural in the case of the Alsietina.)

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Aqua Felice.

and which is now called, after the name which he bore 'in religion,' Aqua Felice. A more complete contrast is hardly presented to us by history than between the first founder and the restorer of this aqueduct, between the young, fresh, warm-hearted Emperor, only too gentle a ruler and too dutiful a son for the fierce times in which he lived, and the proud and lonely old Pope, who bent low as if in decrepitude till he had picked up the Papal Tiara, and then stood erect, just and inflexible, a terror to the world and to Rome.

With Alexander Severus the history of the aqueducts closes. In the terrible convulsions which marked the middle of the third century there was no time or money to spare for the embellishment of the city. When peace was restored Diocletian and his attendant group of Emperors were to be found at Milan, at Nicomedeia, anywhere rather than at Rome. Constantine was too much engrossed with his new capital and his new creed to have leisure for the improvement of the still Pagan city by the Tiber. And two generations after the death of Constantine the barbarians were on the sacred soil of Italy, and it was no longer a question of constructing great works, but of feebly and fearfully defending them.

Maintenance of the aqueducts.

The amount of careful thought and contrivance which was involved in the construction and maintenance of these mighty works can be but imperfectly estimated by us. Ventilating-shafts, or 'respirators' as they are sometimes called, were introduced at proper intervals into the subterraneous aqueducts in order to let out the imprisoned air. At every half mile or so the channel formed an angle, to break the force of the water, and a reservoir was generally placed at every

such corner[1]. The land for fifteen feet on each side of the water-course was purchased from the neighbouring owners and devoted to the use of the aqueduct. Injury from other buildings and from the roots of trees was thus avoided, and the crops raised on these narrow strips of land contributed to the sustenance of the little army of slaves employed in the maintenance of the water-way. Of these at the end of the first century there were 700, constituting two *familiae*. One *familia*, consisting of 240 men, had been formed by that indefatigable water-reformer, the Sir Hugh Myddelton of Rome, Vipsanius Agrippa, by him bequeathed to Augustus, and by Augustus to the State. The other and larger body (460 men) had been formed by Claudius when he was engaged in the construction of the two highest aqueducts, and by him were likewise presented to the State. The command of this little band of men was vested in the *Curator Aquarum*, a high officer[2], who in the imperial age was generally designated for the work of superintending the water-supply. In earlier times this work had not been assigned to any special officer, but had formed part of the functions of an Aedile or a Censor.

Reservoirs.

Outside the walls there were a certain number of reservoirs (*piscinae*), in which some of the aqueducts had the opportunity of clearing their waters by depositing the mud or sand swept into them by a sudden storm.

Inside the city there were 247 'castles of water,'

[1] Parker, Aqueducts, p. 71.

[2] He had a right to the attendance of two lictors, besides an unnamed number of 'apparitors,' when he walked through the streets of Rome.

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heads or reservoirs constructed of masonry, in which the water was stored, and out of which the supply-pipes for the various regions of Rome were taken. For, in theory at least, no pipe might tap the channels of communication, but all must draw from some *castellum aquae.* This provision, however, was often evaded by the dishonesty of the servile watermen, who made a profit out of selling the water of the state to private individuals. A vast underground labyrinth of leaden pipes, in Old Rome as in a modern city, conveyed the water to the cisterns of the different houses. The lead for this purpose was probably brought to a large extent from our own island, since we find traces of the Romans at work in the lead-mines of the Mendip Hills within six years of their conquest of Britain[1]. As Claudius was the then reigning Emperor, the cargoes of lead so shipped from Britain to Rome would be usefully employed in distributing the new water-supply brought to the higher levels by the Anio Novus and Aqua Claudia. One thousand kilogrammes of these leaden pipes were sent, unchronicled, to the melting-pot five years ago by one proprietor alone[2]. But by carefully watching his opportunities, the eminent archaeologist Lanciani has succeeded in rescuing six hundred inscribed pipes from the havoc necessarily caused by all building operations in the soil intersected by them; and these six hundred inscriptions, classed and analysed by him, throw a valuable light on the aquarian laws and customs of Imperial Rome.

Pipes.

It has been said that fraud was extensively practised

[1] See Hübner's article 'Eine Römische Annexion' in the Deutsche Rundschau, May 8, 1878.

[2] Prince Alessandro Torlonia (see Lanciani, p. 202).

by the slaves in the employment of the *Curator Aquarum*. It may have been some suspicion of these fraudulent practices which caused the Emperor Nerva to nominate to that high place Sextus Julius Frontinus. This man, energetic, fearless, thorough, and equally ready to grapple with the difficulties of peaceful and of warlike administration, reminds us of the best type of our own Anglo-Indian governors. For three years (A. D. 75–78) he successfully administered the affairs of the province of Britain, as the worthy successor of Cerealis, as the not unworthy predecessor of Agricola. The chief exploit that marked his tenure of office was the subjugation of the Silures, the warlike and powerful tribe who held the hills of Brecknock and Glamorgan. Twenty years later, and when he was probably past middle life, Nerva, as has been said, delegated to him the difficult task of investigating and reforming the abuses connected with the water-supply of the capital. The treatise which he composed during his curatorship is our chief authority on the subject of the Roman aqueducts. Containing many careful scientific calculations and many useful hints as to the best means of upholding those mighty structures, it is an admirable specimen of the strong, clear common-sense and faithful attention to minute detail which were the characteristics of the best specimens of Roman officials.

Appointment of Frontinus as *Curator Aquarum*, 97.

His previous career.

The attention of Frontinus was at once arrested by the fact that in the *commentarii* or registers of the water-office there was actually a larger quantity of water accounted for than the whole amount which, according to the same books, appeared to be received from the various aqueducts. This slip on the part of the fraudulent *aquarii* caused the new Curator to take

Frontinus grapples with the abuses connected with the water-supply.

careful measurements of the water at the source of each aqueduct: and these measurements led him to the astounding result that the quantity of water entering the aqueducts was greater than the quantity *alleged* to be distributed [1] through them by nearly one half [2]. Some part of this difference might be due to unavoidable leakage along the line of the aqueducts: but far the larger part of it was due to the depredations of private persons, assisted by the corrupt connivance of the *aquarii.* When a private person had received a grant of water from the State, the proper course was for him to deposit a model of the pipe which had been conceded to him in the office of the Curator, whose servants were then directed to make an orifice of the same dimensions in the side of the reservoir, and permit the consumer to attach to it a pipe of the same size. Sometimes however, for a bribe, the *aquarius* would make a hole of larger diameter than the concession. Sometimes, while keeping the hole of the right size, he would attach a larger pipe which would soon be filled by the pressure of the water oozing through the wall of the reservoir. Sometimes a pipe for which there was absolutely no authority at all would be introduced into the reservoir, or yet worse into the aqueduct before it reached the reservoir. Sometimes the grant of water, which was by its express terms limited to the individual for life, would by corrupt connivance, without any fresh grant, be

[1] *Erogatio* is the technical term for the distribution of the water.

[2] Amount measured at the sources, 24,805 quinariae : amount in the commentarii, 12,755 : amount of admitted 'erogation,' 14,343. See Table A at the end of this chapter.

continued to his heirs. At every point the precious liquid treasure of the State was being wasted, that the pockets of the *familia* who served the aqueduct might be filled. It was probably some rumour of this infidelity of the *aquarii* to their trust, as well as a knowledge of the lavish grants of some of the Emperors, which caused Pliny to say, a generation before the reforms of Frontinus, 'The Aqua Virgo excels all other waters to the touch, and the Aqua Marcia to the taste; but the pleasure of both has now for long been lost to the city, through the ambition and avarice of the men who pervert the fountains of the public health for the supply of their own villas and suburban estates[1].'

These then were the abuses which the former governor of Britain and conqueror of the Silures was placed in office to reform; and there can be little doubt that, at any rate for a time, he did reform them and restore to the people of Rome the full water-supply to which they were entitled. What was that water-supply, stated in terms with which we are familiar? What was the equivalent of the 24,805 *quinariae* which Frontinus insisted on debiting to the account of the *aquarii* at Rome? In attempting to answer this question we are at once confronted by the difficulty, that though Frontinus has given us very exact particulars as to the dimensions of the pipes employed, he has not put beyond the possibility of a doubt the *rate* at which the water flowed through them, and which may have been very different for different aqueducts.

M. Rondelet, a French scholar and engineer of the

[1] Historia Naturalis, lib. xxxi.

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Estimates of the total water-supply of Rome.

early part of this century[1], after enquiring very carefully into the subject, came to the conclusion that the value of the *quinaria* was equivalent to a service of sixty cubic metres per day. Lanciani, going minutely over the same ground, slightly alters this figure, which he turns into 63·18 cubic metres, or 13,906 gallons a day. If we may rely on this computation, the whole amount of water poured into Rome at the end of the first century by the aqueducts, before Trajan and Alexander Severus had augmented the aquarian treasures of the city by the water-courses which bore their names, was not less than 344,938,330 gallons per day. Adopting the conjecture, in which there seems some probability[2], that the population of Rome in its most prosperous estate reached to about a million and a half, this gives a supply of 230 gallons daily for each inhabitant.

Comparison with modern cities.

In our own country at the present day the consumption of water in our large towns varies between twenty and thirty gallons per head daily, and in one or two towns does not rise above ten gallons[3]. What the supply may have been in the London of the Plantagenets and Tudors, before the great water-reform of Sir Hugh Myddelton, we have perhaps no

[1] His translation of Frontinus, with notes and plates, was published at Paris in the year 1820.

[2] See vol. i. p. 395.

[3] See Table in Humber's Water Supply of Cities and Towns (London, 1876, p. 86. The average for many European towns seems to be about the same as ours: for Berlin and Lyons 20 gallons daily, Paris 28 (London 29), Leghorn 30, Hamburg 33. Some of the American towns show much larger averages: Toronto 77 gallons, Buffalo 87, New York 100, Chicago 119, and Washington the extraordinarily high average of 155 gallons daily for each inhabitant.

means of estimating; but it is stated, apparently on good authority, that 'in 1550 the inhabitants of Paris received a supply of only *one quart per day*, and nine-tenths of the people were compelled to obtain their supply direct from the Seine[1].'

Doubt as to the actual value of the unit of measure employed by the Roman water-surveyors.

The estimate of the contents of the aqueducts given above is that which has hitherto obtained most acceptance. It is right, however, to mention that a recent enquirer[2] throws some doubt on Rondelet's calculations. From some observations made by him on the diameter and the gradient of the channel of the Aqua Marcia he reduces the average velocity of the streams, and consequently the volume of water delivered by them, by more than one half. The value of the *quinaria* on this computation descends to about 6000 gallons a day, the total supply of the nine aqueducts in the time of Frontinus to 148,000,000 gallons, and the allowance per head per day to one hundred gallons. Even so, however, the Roman citizen had more than three times the amount provided for the inhabitants of our English cities by the most liberal of our own municipalities.

What share had private citizens in the water-supply?

A reference to the tables at the end of this chapter may, however, seem to call for a yet further modification of our statement as to the aquarian privileges of the Roman. It will there be seen that of the 14,018 *quinariae* distributed, only 6182 went to private persons, while 4443 were bestowed on public works, and no fewer than 3393 were 'erogated' in the name of Caesar, the ubiquitous all-grasping Emperor. The needful qualification is apparent rather than real.

[1] Humber, p. 3.

[2] Author of 'Brevi notizie sull' acqua pia,' quoted by Lanciani (who seems more than half convinced by him), p. 361.

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Doubtless there would be profuse expenditure, even lavish waste of water, in the vast halls of the Palatine, especially when a Vitellius or a Heliogabalus dwelt in them, squandering the wealth of the world upon his banquets. But it is pointed out by Lanciani[1] that the splendid edifices raised by the Emperors for the delight of their subjects, the Flavian Amphitheatre, the Antonine Baths, the Forum of Trajan, and all that class of institutions with which the city was embellished at the expense of the *Fiscus*, would receive their constant supplies of water 'in the name of Caesar.' Perhaps therefore it might be asserted that there was no part of the distribution by which the *poor* citizen benefited more largely than these 3393 *quinariae* of which the Emperor was apparently the receiver.

How was this vast volume of water expended?

This last consideration brings us to the question what could have been done with all this wealth of water so lavishly poured into the Eternal City. The sparkling fountains with which every open space was adorned and refreshed, the great artificial lakes, on which at the occasion of public festivals mimic navies fought and in which marine monsters sported, are in part an answer to our question. But the *Thermae*, those magnificent ranges of halls in which the poorest citizen of Rome could enjoy, free of expense, all and more than all the luxuries that we associate with our mis-named Turkish Bath, the *Thermae*, those splendid temples of health, cleanliness, and civilisation, must undoubtedly take the responsibility of the largest share in the water-consumption of Rome. We glanced a little while ago[2] at the mighty Baths of Caracalla,

Chiefly on the baths.

[1] P. 369.

[2] P. 97.

able to accommodate 1600 bathers at once. Twice that number, we are told[1], could enjoy the Baths of Diocletian, those vast baths in whose central hall a large church[2] is now erected, large, but occupying a comparatively small part of the ancient building. It is true that this was the most extensive of all the Roman *Thermae*; but the Baths of Constantine on the Quirinal, of Agrippa by the Pantheon, of Titus and Trajan above the ruins of the Golden House of Nero, were also superb buildings, fit to be the chosen resort of the sovereign people of the world; and all (with the possible exception of the Baths of Titus) were still in use, still receiving the crystal treasures of the aqueducts, when Belisarius recovered Rome for the Roman Empire.

Gothic destruction of the aqueducts.

Now, in these first weeks of March 537, all this splendid heritage of civilisation perished as in a moment. 'The Goths having thus arranged their army destroyed all the aqueducts, so that no water might enter from them into the city[3].' The historian's

[1] Olympiodorus, p. 469 (ed. Bonn).

[2] S. Maria degli Angeli.

[3] Procopius, De B. G. i. 19. He goes on to state that the aqueducts were fourteen in number, built of baked bricks by 'the men of old,' and of such dimensions that a man on horseback could ride through them. This last statement is an exaggeration. The specus of the Anio Novus, the highest of all the aqueducts, is only 2·70 metres, or 8 feet 9 inches high, and most of them are about 4 or 5 feet high. The number of fourteen is made up, according to Lanciani (p. 186), by the nine of Frontinus, the Trajana, the Alexandrina, and three supplemental channels, the Augusta, the Specus Octavianus, and the Specus Antonianus, which though not independent aqueducts might seem so to Procopius, as they touched the wall at different points from the main channels. Jordan (i. 479) thinks that Procopius mentioned the number fourteen from some remembrance of the fourteen regions of the city.

statement is very clear and positive: otherwise we might be disposed to doubt whether the barbarians burrowed beneath the ground to discover and destroy the Aqua Appia, which is subterraneous till after it has entered the circuit of the walls. One would like to be informed also how they succeeded in arresting these copious streams of water without turning the Campagna itself into a morass. The waters which came from the Anio valley may perhaps have been diverted back again into that stream, but some of the others which had no river-bed near them must surely have been difficult to deal with. Possibly the sickness which at a later period assailed the Gothic host may have sprung in part from the unwholesome accumulation of these stagnant waters.

Change hereby wrought in the habits of the people of Rome.

But our chief interest in the operation, an interest of regret, arises from the change which it must have wrought in the habits of the Roman people. Some faint and feeble attempts to restore the aqueducts were possibly made when the war was ended: in fact one such, accomplished by Belisarius for the Aqua Trajana, is recorded in an inscription[1]. But as a whole, we may confidently state that the imperial system of aqueducts was never restored. Three in the course of ages were recovered for the City by the public spirit of her pontiffs[2], and one (the Marcia) has been added to her resources in our own days by the

[1] On an arch of the Trajana at Vicarello—

BELISARIVS . ACQVISIVIT

ANNOR . . . .

'Malissimo copiato' says Lanciani (p. 166), to whom I owe this inscription.

[2] The Aqua Virgo (perhaps only transiently lost), Aqua Paola (Trajana), and Aqua Felice (Alexandrina).

enterprise of a joint-stock company; but the Rome of the Middle Ages was practically, like the Rome of the Kings, dependent for her water on a few wells and cisterns and on the mud-burdened Tiber. The Bath with all its sinful luxuriousness, which brought it under the ban of philosophers and churchmen, but also with all its favouring influences on health, on refinement, even on clear and logical thought, the Bath which the eleven aqueducts of Rome had once replenished for a whole people, now became a forgotten dream of the past. As we look onward from the sixth century the Romans of the centuries before us will be in some respects a better people than their ancestors, more devout, less arrogant, perhaps less licentious, but they will not be so well-washed a people. And the sight of Rome, holy but dirty, will exert a very different and far less civilising influence on the nations beyond the Alps who come to worship at her shrines than would have been exerted by a Rome, Christian indeed, but also rejoicing in the undiminished treasures of her artificial streams. Should an author ever arise who shall condescend to take the History of Personal Cleanliness for his theme (and historians have sometimes chosen subjects of less interest for humanity than this), he will find that one of the darkest days in his story is the day when the Gothic warriors of Witigis ruined the aqueducts of Rome.

NOTE A.

TABLE I. THE SCHEDULES OF FRONTINUS, SHOWING THE WASTE OF WATER IN THE AQUEDUCTS.

	1. Amount on the Registers.	2. Amount as measured at the fountain head.	3. Difference between Nos. 1 & 2.	4. Distribution (Erogatio).	5. Deficiency to be accounted for. Difference between Nos. 2 & 4.
Appia . .	841	1825	984	704	1121
Aniô Vetus.	1541	4398	2857	1610	2788
Marcia . .	2162	4690	2528	2191[2]	2499
Tepula . .	400	445	45	445	...
Julia . .	649	1206	557	993[3]	213
Virgo . .	652	2504[1]	1852	2504	...
Alsietina .	392	392	...	392	...
Claudia . .	2855	4607	1752	1750*	2857
Anio Novus	3263	4738	1475	4200*	538
				14789 —446[2 3]	10016 +446[2 3]
	12755	24805	12050	14343	10462

[1] Measured near the city, at seventh milestone.
[2] 256 given to Anio Novus and Tepula. [3] 190 given to Tepula.

TABLE II. ACCOUNT OF DISTRIBUTION (EROGATIO).

	Outside the City.		Inside the City.			
	1. Caesar.	2. Private Persons.	3. Caesar.	4. Private Persons.	5. Public Purposes.	Total.
Appia . .	...	5	151	194	354	704
†Anio Vetus.	104	404	60	490	552	1610
†Marcia . .	269	568	116	543	439	1935
Tepula . .	58	56	42	237	52 ?	445
†Julia . .	85	121	18	196 ?	383	803
Virgo . .	...	200	509	338	1457	2504
Alsietina .	254 ?	138	...	...	...	392
†Claudia . .	217	439	} 779	1839	1206	5625[4]
†Anio Novus	731	414				
	1718	2345	1675	3837	4443	14018

[4] This does not correspond with the figures given above (* *).

† In the lines thus marked, the conjectural alterations of the text in Dederich's edition (Leipsic, 1855) have been adopted in order to make the numbers fit.

Summary:—Cæsar	. . . .	1718 1675	3393
Private Persons	. . .	2345 3837	6182
Public Works	. . . .		4443
			14018

All the above measurements are in *quinariae.* It is calculated that each *quinaria* represents a daily supply of 63·18 cubic metres, or 13,906 gallons.

TABLE III. DETAILED ACCOUNT OF EXPENDITURE OF WATER FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES (COLUMN 5 IN TABLE II).

	Camps.		Public Works.		Fountains (Munera).		Tanks (Lacus).		Total.
Appia . .	I	3	XIV	123	I	2	XCII	226	354
Anio Vetus	I	50	XIX	195	IX	88	XCIV	218 1?	551 } 1 }
Marcia . .	IV	41	XV	41	XII	104	CXIII	253	439
Tepula . .	I	12	III	7	...	...	XIII	32 1?	51 } 1 }
Julia . .	III	69	X	182	III	67	XXVIII	65	383
Virgo . .			XVI	1380	II	26	XXV	51	1457
Alsietina .	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Claudia. . } Anio Novus }	IX	104	XVIII	522	XII	99	CCXXVI	481	1206
	XIX	279	XCV	2450	XXXIX	386	DXCI	1328	4443

The Roman numerals in the inner columns show the number of public institutions on which the *quinariae* of water detailed in the other columns were bestowed. Adding these together we get—19 Castra, 95 Opera Publica, 39 Munera, and 591 Lacus. It is certain, however, that we *ought* not thus to add them except to get a more approximate estimate of their number, as the same camp or fountain was, perhaps invariably, fed by two or even three aqueducts, that it might not be dependent on one single source of supply.

The camps are probably chiefly the great *Castra Praetoria,* but also the smaller camps of the *cohortes vigilum* and other troops quartered in the city.

The *Opera Publica* are, partly at least, the great sheets of water on which mock sea-fights and other spectacles were exhibited. We get a hint of their character from the words of Frontinus, who says that of the 1380 *quinariae* contributed by the Aqua Virgo to public works 460 went 'to the Euripus alone, to which it gave its own name' of Virgo. The name Euripus, from the channel which separates Euboea from the mainland of Greece, was given to any great artificial channel, particularly (as it seems) to a large trench which was dug along the outer circumference of the Circus Maximus, and filled with water.

The translation of *Munera* and *Lacus* is by no means certain. It is clear from the Table that the former were much larger than the latter—an average of 9 *quinariae* going to each *munus* and little more than 2 to each *lacus*. Jordan (Topographie der Stadt Rom, ii. 49–60) discusses the meaning of *lacus* at great length, and seems upon the whole to incline to the meaning which I have adopted above, and which is also that favoured by Lanciani (p. 369).

Evidently at the time of Frontinus the term *munus* was a lately introduced piece of fashionable slang, whatever was the thing which it was meant to describe. He says (iii) that he will state 'quantum publicis operibus, quantum muneribus—*ita enim cultiores appellant*—quantum lacibus . . . detur.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOTHIC ASSAULT.

Source:— **Authority.**

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, i. 19–23.

AN immediate effect of the cutting off of the water-supply was to endanger the regular delivery of the rations of flour to the soldiers and the citizens. Now that the water of Trajan's aqueduct no longer came dashing down over the Janiculan hill, the corn-mills which it had been wont to drive were silent. An obvious suggestion would have been to use beasts of burden to supply the needed power. But unfortunately, in order to effect the necessary economy of provisions, all beasts of burden, except the horses needed for warlike purposes, had been slain. Therefore, with his usual fertility of resource, Belisarius contrived to make water take the place of water. Stretching ropes across the Tiber from bank to bank near the Aelian Bridge[1], he moored two skiffs side by side at a distance of two feet apart, placed his mill-stones on board and hung his water-wheel between

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537. Stoppage of the flour-mills.

The water-mills on the Tiber.

[1] Now the Ponte S. Angelo. This is probably what Procopius means by τῆς γεφύρας ἧς ἄρτι πρὸς τῷ περιβόλῳ οὔσης ἐμνήσθην (De B. G. i. 19).

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the skiffs, where the current of the river narrowed by the interposition of the bridge was strong enough to turn it and move the machinery[1]. The Goths heard of this contrivance from the deserters who still came over to them, and succeeded in breaking the water-wheels by throwing huge logs, and even the carcases of slain Romans, into the stream. Belisarius however by fastening to the bridge strong iron chains which stretched across the river, not only preserved his water-mills from these obstructions, but also, which was more important, guarded the city against the peril of a sudden attack by the boats' crews of the barbarians. The water-mills of the Tiber thus invented by Belisarius continued to be used in Rome down to our own day, but are now apparently all superseded by mills driven by steam.

The iron boom.

The watchful care of Belisarius did not even neglect to take into consideration the *cloacae*, the great sewers, of Rome; but as the mouths of all of them opened into the Tiber, in that part of it which was within the circuit of the walls, no special provision against a hostile surprise appeared to be necessary in this quarter.

The Cloacae.

Just at this time, when men's minds were on the stretch, waiting for the mighty duel to begin, came the tidings of an incident, trifling and yet tragical, which the superstitious in either army might easily regard as an omen of success to the one and of disaster to the other. Some Samnite lads, keeping their sheep on the slopes of the Apennines, beguiled the tedium of

Omen of the Samnite boys.

[1] I think there was a whole string of these water-mills one behind another, but the language of Procopius is not very clear: Ἐπέκεινα δὲ ἄλλας τε ἀκάτους ἐχομένας τῶν ἀεὶ ὄπισθεν κατὰ λόγον ἐδέσμευε, καὶ τὰς μηχανὰς τρόπῳ τῷ αὐτῷ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐνέβαλε (Ibid.).

their occupation by choosing out two of their sturdiest, naming one Witigis and the other Belisarius, and setting them to wrestle for the victory. As Fate would have it, Witigis was thrown. Then said the boys in sport, 'Witigis shall be hanged.' They had tied him up to a tree, meaning to cut him down again before he had received any serious harm, when suddenly a wolf from the mountains was upon them and they fled. The poor boy, abandoned to his fate, died in agony. But when the story was noised abroad through Samnium, people read in it an indication of the predestined victory of Belisarius, and took no steps for the punishment of the youthful executioners.

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Still, notwithstanding omens and auguries, the citizens of Rome were by no means satisfied with the turn that things were taking. With their food doled out to them in strict daily rations, with only water enough for drinking (supplied by the river and the wells), and none whatever for the sadly remembered delights of the Bath, unwashed and short of sleep (since to each man his turn for sentry duty at night seemed constantly recurring); above all, with the depressing feeling that all these sacrifices were in vain, and that those myriads of the Goths whom they saw burning their villas and ravaging the pleasant places all around the city *must* soon be within its walls, they began to murmur against Belisarius. Speeches were made in the Senate[1], not loud but full of angry feeling, against the general who had ventured to hold Rome with such an utterly inadequate force,

Discontent in Rome.

[1] Οἱ ἐκ βουλῆς ἣν σύγκλητον καλοῦσι says Procopius (De B. G. i. 20). It is strange that he should explain one Greek word by another, and that other no real translation of Senatus.

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and who was bringing the loyal subjects of the Emperor, guiltless of any wrong, into such extremity of peril by his rashness.

Gothic embassy.

Witigis, who was informed by the deserters of this change of feeling, tried to turn it to account by sending an embassy to Belisarius, headed by a certain Albes. In the presence of the Senate and the Generals, Albes delivered an harangue in which, not uncourteously, he suggested to Belisarius that courage was one thing and rashness another. 'If it is courage that has brought you here, look forth from the walls, survey the vast multitude of the Goths. You will have need of all your courage in dealing with that mighty host. But if you now feel that it was mere rashness that has led you hither, and if at the same time you are awakened to the thought of all the miseries which you are inflicting on the Romans by your opposition to their lawful ruler, we come to offer you one more opportunity of repentance. The Romans lived in all comfort and freedom under the rule of the good King Theodoric. Now, through your undesired interposition, they are suffering the extremity of misery, and their King, the King both of Goths and Italians[1], is obliged to encamp outside the walls, and practise all the cruel acts of war against the people whom he loves. We call upon you therefore to evacuate the city of Rome; but as it is not our wish to trample on the fallen we concede to you the liberty of marching forth unmolested and of taking with you all your possessions.'

Speech of Albes.

[1] *Μηδὲ τῷ Γότθων τε καὶ Ἰταλιωτῶν δεσπότῃ ἐμποδὼν ἵστασο* (Ibid.). I must confess that I doubt whether a Gothic orator really spoke of Witigis as *δεσπότης* of the Goths.

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The spirit of the Gothic King was a good deal changed by the events of the last few days. On his march to Rome his only fear had been lest Belisarius should escape his dreadful vengeance. Now he was willing to offer him all the honours of war if only he would march out of the city which he ought never to have been allowed to enter. It may be doubted whether Witigis was wise in showing so manifestly his desire for the departure of the imperial General. The Senate, as we know, had begun to take a very gloomy view of the prospects of the defence. Such a speech as that of Albes would tend to reassure many a waverer, by showing him that the Goths, in their secret hearts, felt no great confidence of victory.

Reply of Belisarius.

Belisarius in reply said, that the prudence or imprudence of his plan of campaign was his own affair, and he did not intend to take the advice of Witigis concerning it. 'But I say to you that the time will come when you shall long to hide your heads under the thorns of the Campagna and shall not be able to do so. When we took Rome we laid hands on no alien possession, but only undid that work of violence by which you seized upon a city to which you had no claim. If any one of you fancies that he is going to enter Rome without a struggle he is mistaken. While Belisarius lives he will never quit his hold of this city.'

Answer of Fidelius to the Goths.

So spake Belisarius. The Roman Senators sat mute and trembling, not daring to echo the proud words of the General, nor to repel the accusations of the ambassadors upbraiding them with their treachery and ingratitude. Only Fidelius, aforetime Quaestor under Athalaric[1] and now Praetorian Prefect under Beli-

[1] See p. 83.

BOOK V. Ch. 7. 537. sarius, answered his late lords with words of scorn and banter. The ambassadors on their return to the camp were eagerly questioned by Witigis, what manner of man Belisarius was, and how he received the proposal for an evacuation of the city. To which they replied that he seemed to be the last man in the world to be frightened by mere words. Accordingly, Witigis set about the task of convincing him by more efficacious arguments.

Gothic preparations for assault. Moveable towers. Having counted the courses of masonry in the walls, and thus formed as accurate an estimate as possible of their height, the Goths constructed several wooden towers of the same height as the walls, running on wheels placed under their four corners, and with ropes fastened to them, so that they could be drawn by oxen. On the highest platform of the towers were ladders, which could be used if necessary to scale the battlements.

Battering-rams. In addition to the towers the Goths also made ready eight battering-rams. Procopius gives us a detailed description of this engine of war, Roman, as it is generally supposed, in its origin, but now borrowed from the Romans by the barbarians[1]. They also pre-

The battering-ram as described by Procopius. [1] Procopius's description, which adds a few particulars to the well-known sketch in Josephus (De Bellis Judaeorum, iii. 7. 19), is as follows:—

'Four upright pillars of equal height are erected opposite to one another. Eight beams are inserted into these pillars at right angles, four above and four at the base. Having thus put together the frame of a four-sided hut they surround it on all sides with a covering of hides to serve instead of walls, in order that the machine may be light for those who have to draw it and at the same time that the men inside may be as little as possible liable to be hit by the darts of the enemy. Within, and as much as possible in the middle of the enclosure, another beam crosswise is

pared fascines, of the boughs of trees and the reeds of the Campagna, which they could throw into the fosse, so filling it up and preparing the way for the advance of their warlike engines. 537. Fascines.

On his side Belisarius armed the towers and battlements with a plenteous supply of the defensive engines of the period, the *Balista*, that magnified bow, worked by machinery, which shot a short square arrow twice the distance of an ordinary bow-shot and with such force as to break trees or stones [1]; and the *Onager* or Wild Ass, which was a similarly magnified sling. Each gate he obstructed with a machine called a *Lupus*, which seems, from the somewhat obscure description of Procopius, to have been a kind of double portcullis, worked both from above and below, and ready to close its terrible wolf-jaws upon any enemy who should venture within reach of its fangs [2].

Counter preparations of Belisarius. Balistae. Onager. Lupus.

The general disposition of the army of Belisarius,

hung by loose chains from the top of the machine. The end, which is shod with iron, is either sharp like the point of an arrow or four-square like an anvil. The whole machine runs on four wheels, one under each of the four pillars; and not less than fifty men move it from within. When they have got it close up to the wall, by turning some sort of machinery they draw back the beam of which I spoke and again with great force thrust it against the wall. By its repeated strokes it can easily shatter and destroy whatever it meets with, and hence its name, because the stroke of this beam is like that of a ram butting at its fellows. Such is the fashion of the rams used by besiegers.'

[1] The arrow (or rather bolt) of the Balista was half the length and four times the width of an ordinary arrow.

[2] Procopius gives a minute (but not very clear) description of the Balista, the Wild Ass, and the Wolf, which were employed by Belisarius. It is not easy to understand his object in thus minutely describing objects with which every soldier must have been familiar.

BOOK V. CH. 7. which amounted in all to but 3000 men, was the same as that mentioned in a previous chapter[1]. Bessas the imperialist Ostrogoth, and Peranius the Iberian prince from the shores of the Caspian, commanded at the great Praenestine Gate. At the Salarian and Pincian Gates Belisarius himself took charge of the fight; at the Flaminian, Ursicinus, who had under him a detachment of infantry known as 'The Emperor's Own[2].' They had, however, little to do in the battle which is about to be described, as the Flaminian Gate stood on a precipitous piece of ground and was too difficult of access for the Goths to assault it[3].

537. Arrangement of the defending forces. Porta Praenestina. Porta Salaria and Pinciana. Porta Flaminia.

Muro Torto.

More astonishing was it to Procopius that the wall a little to the east of the Flaminian Gate should also have been left unassaulted by the Goths. Here, to this day, notwithstanding some lamentable and perfectly unnecessary 'restorations' of recent years, may be seen some portions of the Muro Torto, a twisted, bulging, overhanging mass of *opus reticulatum*[4]. It looks as if it might fall to-morrow (and so, as we shall see, thought Belisarius), but it has stood in its present state for eighteen centuries. But the story of this piece of wall and the superstitions connected with it

[1] P. 131.

[2] Οἱ Ῥῆγες ἐνταῦθα πεζικὸν τέλος ἐφύλασσον (De B. G. i. 23). No doubt these are the same as the *Regii*, one of the seventeen 'Auxilia Palatina' under the command of the Magister Militum Praesentalis, mentioned in the Notitia Orientis, cap. v.

[3] We now know certainly that the Porta del Popolo stands on the very same site as the Porta Flaminia, and we can only say that the configuration of the ground outside it, which is now comparatively level, must have changed considerably since the sixth century.

[4] Not later therefore than the first century A.D.



THE MURO TORTO

From an Engraving in Ricciardelli's 'Vedute delle Porte e Mura di Roma,' published 1832

[*To face page* 168, *Vol. IV*

is so curious that Procopius must tell it in his own words:—

'Between the Flaminian Gate and the gate-let next in order on the right hand, which is called the Pincian, a part of the wall split asunder long ago of its own accord. The cleft however did not reach to the ground, but only about half-way down. Thus it did not fall, nor receive any further damage, but it so leaned over in both directions that one part seems within, the other without the rest of the enclosure. From this circumstance the Romans have from of old called that part of the wall, in their own language, *Murus Ruptus*. Now when Belisarius was at the first minded to pull down this bit and build it up again, the Romans stopped him, assuring him that Peter (the Apostle whom they venerate and admire above all others) had promised that he would care for the defence of their city at that point[1]. And things turned out in this quarter exactly as they had expected; for neither on the day of the first assault, nor during any subsequent part of the siege, did the enemy approach this portion of the wall in force, or cause any tumult there. We often wondered that in all the assaults and midnight surprises of the enemy, this part of the fortifications never seemed to come into the remembrance either of besiegers or besieged. For this reason no one hath since attempted to rebuild it, but the wall remains to this day cleft in two. So much for the *Murus Ruptus*.'

The reader will probably feel, in perusing this passage,

[1] There was a legend (for which I cannot quote the authority) that the wall had first lost its perpendicular form by bowing towards St. Peter when he was led out to execution.

BOOK V. CH. 7. 537. that Procopius himself, though rather a Theist than a Christian, and not always constant even to Theism, was puzzled whether to accept or reject the legend of St. Peter's guardianship of the Muro Torto. He shows the same attitude of suspended belief towards the Sibylline Oracles and many other heathen marvels which are recorded in his pages.

Pons Aelius. Tomb of Hadrian. Constantine, removed by Belisarius from the Porta Flaminia, was placed in charge of the river-side wall and the Bridge and Tomb of Hadrian. Paulus commanded at the Pancratian Gate on the other side of the Tiber: but here too, on account of the difficulty of the ground, the Goths attempted nothing worthy of note. A striking contrast this to one of the very last sieges of Rome, that under General Oudinot in 1849, when the Porta S. Pancrazio was riddled with hostile bullets. In consequence of the frequent skirmishes in that quarter the whole Janiculum was then covered with mounds, now grass-grown and peaceful-looking, under which French and Italian soldiers, slain in those dreary days, slumber side by side.

Porta Pancratii.

The assault begun, about 21st Mar. 537. The preparations of the Goths being completed, on the eighteenth day of the siege, at sunrise, they began the assault. With dismay the Romans, clustered on the walls, beheld the immense masses of men converging to the City, the rams, the towers drawn by oxen moving slowly towards them. They beheld the sight with dismay, but a smile of calm scorn curved the lips of Belisarius. The Romans could not bear to see him thus trifling as they thought in the extremity of their danger; implored him to use the balistae on the walls before the enemy came any nearer; called

Terror of the Romans.

Calmness of Belisarius.

him shameless and incompetent when he refused: but still Belisarius waited and still he smiled. At length, when the Goths were now close to the edge of the fosse, he drew his bow and shot one of their leaders, armed with breastplate and mail, through the neck. The chief fell dead, and a roar of applause at the fortunate omen rose from the Roman ranks. Again he bent his bow and again a Gothic noble fell, whereat another shout of applause from the walls rent the air. Then Belisarius gave all his soldiers the signal to discharge their arrows, ordering those immediately around him to leave the men untouched and to aim all their shafts at the oxen. In a few minutes the milk-white Etrurian oxen were all slain, and then of necessity the towers, the rams, all the engines of war remained immovable at the edge of the fosse, useless for attack, only a hindrance to the assaulting host. So close to the walls, it was impossible for the Goths to bring up other beasts of burden, or to devise any means to repair the disaster. Then men understood the reason of the smile of Belisarius, who was amused at the simplicity of the barbarians in thinking that he would allow them to drive their oxen close up under his battlements. Then they recognised his wisdom in postponing the reply from the balistae till the Goths had come so near that their disaster was irreparable.

First blood drawn.

The towers made useless.

The towers and the rams had apparently been intended specially for that part of the wall close to the Pincian Gate. Foiled in this endeavour, Witigis drew back his men a little distance from the fosse, formed them into deep columns, and ordered them not to attempt any farther assault on that part of the walls, but so to harass the troops by incessant discharges of

Change in the Gothic tactics.

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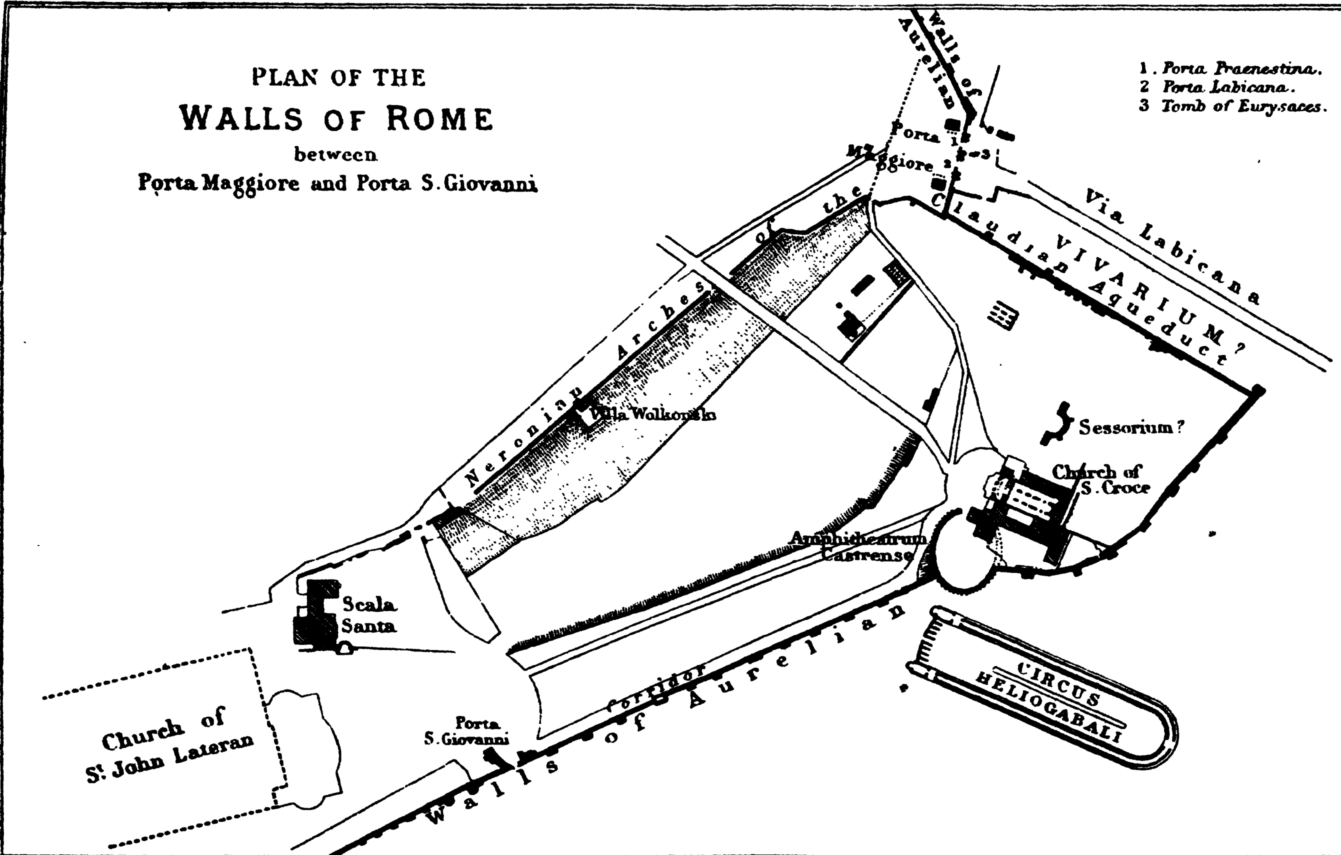
missile weapons as to prevent Belisarius from giving any assistance to the other points which he meant to assail, and which were especially the Porta Praenestina and the Porta Aurelia.

Fighting at Porta Salaria.

During this time sharp fighting was going on at the other gate which was under the immediate command of Belisarius, the Porta Salaria. Here for a little while the barbarians seemed to be getting the advantage. A long-limbed Goth, one of their nobles and renowned for his prowess in war, armed (as perhaps their common soldiers were not) with helmet and breastplate, left the ranks of his comrades and swung himself up into a tree from which he was able to discharge frequent and deadly missiles at the defenders of the battlements. At length, however, one of the balistae worked by the soldiers in the tower on the left of the gateway, more by good fortune than good aim, succeeded in striking him. The bolt went right through the warrior's body and half through the tree: thus pinned to the tree-trunk he was left dangling between earth and heaven. At this sight a chill fear ran through the Gothic ranks, and withdrawing themselves out of the range of the balistae they gave no more trouble to the defenders of the Salarian Gate.

Attack on Porta Praenestina (P. Maggiore).

The weight of the Gothic assault was directed against the Praenestine Gate, the modern Porta Maggiore. Here they collected a number of their engines of attack, towers, battering-rams, and ladders: and here both the hoped-for absence of the great general and the dilapidated state of the wall inspired some reasonable hope of victory. The neighbourhood of the Porta Maggiore is to this day one of the most


PLAN OF THE
WALLS OF ROME
between
Porta Maggiore and Porta S. Giovanni
1. Porta Praenestina.
2 Porta Labicana.
3 Tomb of Eurysaces.
Walls of Aurelian
Porta Maggiore
Via Labicana
VIVARIUM?
Claudian Aqueduct
Neronian Arches of the
Villa Wolkonski
Sessorium?
Church of S. Croce
Amphitheatrum Castrense
Scala Santa
Church of St. John Lateran
Porta S. Giovanni
Corridor
Walls of Aurelian
CIRCUS HELIOGABALI

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537. Description of the Porta Maggiore.

interesting portions of the wall of Rome. Here you see the two stately arches which spanned the diverging roads to Labicum and Praeneste. Above them you read the clear, boldly-carved inscriptions which record the constructions of Claudius, and the restorations of Vespasian and Titus. Between them stands the curious tomb of the baker Eurysaces, which bore the sculptured effigies of the baker and his wife and a quaint inscription (still legible) recording that 'in this bread-basket' the fragments of Marcus Vergilius Eurysaces and his excellent wife are gathered together. High above run the channels of the Anio Novus and the Aqua Claudia. Hard by at a lower level the Julia, Tepula, and Marcia, and yet lower the Anio Vetus enter the city. This intersection of the aqueducts gave the Porta Praenestina a strength peculiar to itself, and caused it to take an important place in the fortifications of the later emperors.

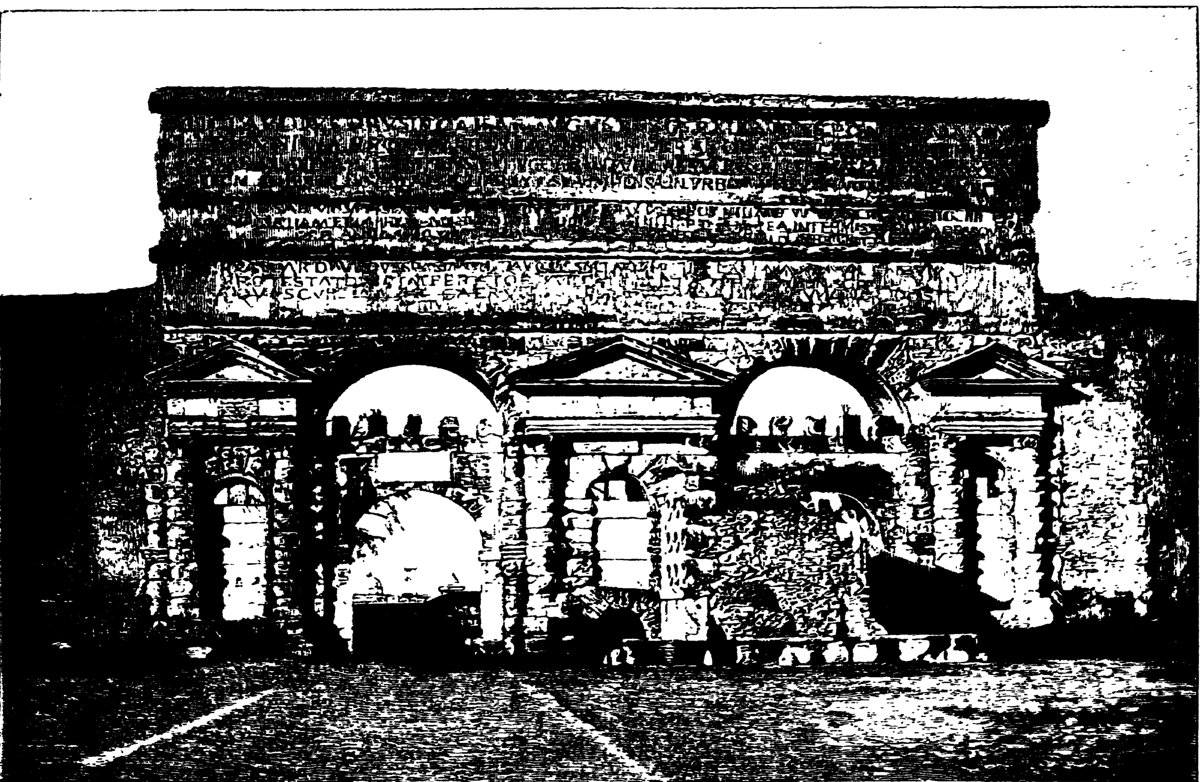
Different aspect at the time of the siege.

When the Goths assaulted Rome the Praenestine and Labican Gates did not show the same fair proportions which they displayed in the days of Claudius, and which they have recovered by the judicious restoration effected in 1838. By the operations of the military engineers of Aurelian and Honorius[1] the Labican Gate[2] was closed and the usual round towers[3]

[1] Over the Praenestine Gate, as well as over the Tiburtine and the Portuensian Gates, ran an inscription recording the restoration of the walls, gates, and towers of the city by the most unconquered Emperors Arcadius and Honorius, and the clearing away of immense heaps of rubbish at the suggestion of the illustrious Count Stilicho,

[2] That on the south side. It is now open and the Praenestine closed.

[3] I say towers in the plural, as there can be no doubt there



PORTA MAGGIORE (EXTERIOR).

From a Photograph in J. H. Parker's Series.]

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BOOK V. CH. 7. 537.

were erected, flanking the gate, which enclosed and concealed from view till our own times the Tomb of Eurysaces. The high line of the aqueduct wall still remained (as it does to this day), but it had fallen much out of repair, and the real line of defence seems to have been a lower wall running parallel to it at a distance of less than 100 yards and skirting the line of the Via Labicana. Between these two walls, which ran thus side by side for about 500 yards, a strip of land was enclosed which was used in old days as a menagerie for the wild beasts that were about to be employed in the shows of the amphitheatre[1]. To use

The Vivarium.

would be at least two, though only one is shown in Ricciardelli's picture (published 1832). The square towers there depicted are probably medieval: and it is evident that the Gate was a good deal altered during the Middle Ages.

Where was the Vivarium?

[1] After very careful consideration I have come to the conclusion that Canina and the majority of Roman topographers are right in placing the Vivarium *here*, between the main wall and the Via Labicana. What most impresses me is the fact that the modern road, which generally keeps close under the wall, here deviates from it and leaves this strip of land unoccupied, for no particular purpose that we can see, since even now it has no substantial buildings upon it, but is chiefly used for stables and cow-houses, and has a generally squalid and deserted appearance. All this looks very much as if there had been in old days some kind of special appropriation of the ground just outside the wall: and there is a wall skirting the road now which, though itself I think entirely modern, may very well be built on ancient foundations. Mr. Freeman's suggestion of the Amphitheatrum Castrense (Brit. Quart. Review, lxxvi. 295) does not seem to me quite to meet the necessities of the case. He himself alludes to the difference between an amphitheatre and a place for storing wild beasts. But besides this, there is a very decided ascent from the surrounding country towards the Amphitheatrum Castrense, whereas Procopius lays stress on the level character of the Vivarium and the facility of approach to it (*ἦν δὲ ὁ ταύτῃ χῶρος ὑμαλὸς κομιδῇ καὶ ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ταῖς ἐφόδοις τῶν προσιόντων ἐγκείμενος*, De

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the words of Procopius, 'It chanced that the [true] wall in that quarter had in great part crumbled away, as the bricks no longer cohered well together. But another low wall had been drawn round it on the outside by the Romans of old, not for safety's sake, for it had neither towers nor battlements nor any other of the appliances for defence, but on account of unseemly luxury, that they might there enclose in cages the lions and other beasts [for the amphitheatre]. For which cause also they called it the *Vivarium*, for that is the name given by the Romans to a place where beasts of ungentle nature are wont to be kept.'

Gothic attack on the Vivarium.

To the Vivarium then the Goths directed the weight of their columns and the larger number of their engines of war. The objective point was well chosen. The ground was level and afforded easy access to the assailants. There was, it is true, a double wall, but the inner one, as the Goths well knew, was decayed and ruinous, and the outer one, though in better preservation, was low and undefended by towers or battlements. But the fatal fault of the attack was that in the narrow space between the two walls there was no room for the barbarians to manœuvre, and of this fault Belisarius determined to avail himself. By this time he had hastened with the most valiant men

B. G. i. 23). Above all, the opening of the Praenestine Gate by Belisarius and the sudden out-rush of the Roman soldiers on the rear of the combatants in the Vivarium seems to me to forbid us to think of the Amphitheatrum Castrense as the scene of the conflict, and almost to require us to place it between the Via Labicana and the Wall.

Fulvius (Antiquitates Urbis, fo. vi) placed the Vivarium near to, or in, the Castra Praetoria, but this is now generally admitted to be a mistake.

of his little army to the place, but he set few defenders on the ramparts and offered little opposition to the strokes with which the Goths battered a breach in the wall of the Vivarium. When this was accomplished, when he saw them pouring in, in their multitudes, to the narrow enclosure, he sent Cyprian and some of the bravest of his troops to man the real wall, formed of the arcades of the aqueducts. The unexpected strength of this opposition caused some dismay in the hearts of the Goths, who had thought their work would be at an end when they had penetrated within the first enclosure. Then, when they were all intent upon the hand-to-hand encounter with the defenders of the wall, Belisarius ordered the Praenestine Gate [1] to be thrown open. Behind it he had massed his troops armed with breastplate and sword; no javelin or pilum to encumber them with its needless aid. They had little to do but to slay. Panic seized the Goths, who sought to pour out of the Vivarium by the narrow breach which they had effected, and many of whom were trampled to death by their own friends. 'They thought no more of valour but of flight,' says the historian, 'each man as best he could.' The Romans followed and slew a great number before they could reach the distant Gothic camp. Belisarius ordered the engines of war collected by the assailants to be burned, and the red flames shooting up into the evening sky carried terror to the hearts of the fugitives.

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The Goths pass the first wall.

The Goths taken in rear.

[1] Procopius speaks of 'gates' in the plural. There can, I think, be no doubt that the Porta Labicana had been closed ever since the time of Honorius, but probably the remembrance of the two gates which had so long existed here, which in fact still existed, though one of them was useless, caused the Porta Praenestina to be spoken of as 'the gates.'

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A similar sally from the Salarian Gate met with like success.

537. Fighting at the Porta Aurelia.

Meanwhile, however, on the north-west of Rome, at the Porta Aurelia (opposite the Castle of Sant' Angelo), the Goths had been much nearer to achieving victory. Here, as has been said, Constantine, withdrawn for this purpose from the Flaminian Gate, had charge of the defence of the city. Two points were especially threatened, the Porta Aurelia and the stretch of river-side wall between it and the Porta Flaminia. This bit of wall had been left somewhat weak, the river seeming here sufficient defence, nor did Belisarius feel himself able to spare a large number of men for its protection. But Constantine, seeing that the enemy were preparing to cross the stream and attack at this place, rushed off himself to defend it. He was successful. When the Goths found that their landing was not unopposed, and that even this piece of wall had defenders, they lost heart and gave up the attempt. These movements, however, occupied precious time, and when, probably about noon, Constantine returned to the Porta Aurelia, he found that important events had taken place in his absence.

The Tomb of Hadrian (the Castle of Sant' Angelo).

The whole course of the attack and defence in that quarter was determined then, as it has been in so many subsequent struggles, by

'The Mole which Hadrian reared on high[1],'

the tomb, the fortress, the prison, of Sant' Angelo. Procopius shall describe it for us, for his is still the fullest account which we possess of the mighty Mausoleum in its glory:—

[1] Childe Harold, iv. 152.

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'The tomb of Hadrian the Roman Emperor is outside the Porta Aurelia, distant from the wall about a bow-shot, a memorable sight. For it is made of Parian marble, and the stones fit closely into one another with no other fastening. It has four equal sides, each about a stone's throw in length, and in height overtopping the wall of the city. Above there are placed statues of men and horses made out of the same stone [Parian], and marvellous to behold. This tomb then the men of old, since it seemed like an additional fortress for their city, joined to the line of fortification by two walls reaching out from the main circuit of the fortifications. And thus the tomb seemed like a citadel protecting the gate.'

Conjectural reconstruction of the Tomb.

From this description and a few hints given by travellers who saw the Mausoleum in the Middle Ages, Roman archaeologists[1] have conjecturally reconstructed its original outline. A quadrangular structure of dazzling white marble, each side 300 Roman feet long and eighty-five feet high, it had upon its sides inscriptions to the various Emperors from Trajan to Severus who were buried within its walls. At the corners of this structure were equestrian statues of four Emperors. Above, two circular buildings, one over the other, were surrounded with colonnades and peopled with marble statues. Over all rose a conical cupola whose summit was 300 feet above the ground, so that it might be said of this Mausoleum as of the City in the Revelation, 'The length and the breadth and the height of it were equal.' Visitors to the gardens of the Vatican may still see there a bronze

[1] Especially Canina (Edifizi, cclxxxiv), whose description I follow with confidence.

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fir-cone, eight feet high, which according to tradition once surmounted the cupola of Hadrian's Tomb.

537. Gothic attack on the Tomb.

Towards this tomb-fortress, then, swarmed the Gothic bands from their camp in the Neronian gardens. They had no elaborate engines like their brethren on the other side of the river, but they had ladders and bows in abundance, and hoped easily to overpower the scanty forces of the defenders. A long colonnade led from the Aelian Bridge to the great Basilica of St. Peter, sheltered by which they approached close under the walls of the Tomb before they were perceived by the garrison. They were then too near for the balistae to be used against them with effect, the bolts discharged by those unwieldy engines flying over the heads of the assailants. The arrows shot from the bows of the Imperial soldiers could not pierce the large oblong shields of the Goths, which reminded Procopius of the enormous bucklers[1] that he had seen used in the Persian wars. Moreover, the quadrangular shape of the building which they had to defend put the garrison at a disadvantage, since, when they were facing the foe on one side, they continually found themselves taken in rear by the assailants on the opposite quarter. Altogether, things looked ill for the defenders of the Tomb, till a sudden instinct drove them to the statues; that silent marble chorus which stood watching the terrible drama. Tearing these down from their bases and breaking the larger figures into fragments, they hurled them down upon the eager Gothic host. At once the exultation of the latter was turned into panic. They drew back from the avalanche of sculpture. They retreated within range

The statues thrown down.

[1] Οὐδὲν ἐλασσομένους τῶν ἐν Πέρσαις δέρρεων (De B. G. i. 22).

of the balistae. The garrison plied these engines with desperate energy, and with shouts discharged their arrows also against the enemy, whose shields now no longer formed the compact *testudo* which had before resisted their missiles. At this moment Constantine appeared upon the scene and turned repulse into defeat. The Tomb of Hadrian was saved, but at a price which would have caused a bitter pang to the artistic Emperor who raised and adorned that mighty Mausoleum[1].

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The Goths repulsed.

Thus, on both sides of the Tiber, the confident onset of the Goths had ended in utter failure. The battle, which began with early dawn, lasted till evening twilight. All night long the flare of the burning engines of the Goths reddened the sky. All night rose the contrasted clamours of the two armies; from the battlements of the city, the cheers and the rude songs in which the Romans praised the fame of their hero-general; from the Gothic camps the lamentation for the fallen, the groans of the wounded, the hurrying steps of men rushing to and fro to bring aid to their agonising comrades.

Complete failure of the assault.

It was asserted by the Romans, and, according to Procopius, admitted by the Gothic leaders, that on this day 30,000 of the barbarians were stretched dead upon the field, beside the vast numbers of the wounded.

[1] The Barberini Faun at Munich and the Dancing Faun at Florence were brought from the fosse below the Tomb of Hadrian, and may have been two of the statues hurled on the heads of the Goths.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROMAN SORTIES.

Authority.

Source:—

BOOK V. CH. 8. PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, i. 24–ii. 2.

537. Letter from Belisarius to Justinian.

AFTER the Gothic assault was repulsed, Belisarius sent a messenger to Justinian with a letter announcing the victory and praying for reinforcements. The letter, which was probably composed by Procopius himself, is worth reading, especially as it helps us to understand the light in which the invasion of Italy was regarded at Constantinople. 'The King shall enjoy his own again' was the key-note of all the Imperial proceedings both at Carthage and at Rome. It was not a young and vigorous nationality, with a fair prospect of an honourable career, that Justinian and his generals seemed to themselves to be suppressing. It was simply an inalienable right that they were asserting, a right that generations of barbaric domination could not weaken, the right of the *Imperator Romanus* to Rome and to every country that her legions had once subdued.

'We have arrived in Italy' (said Belisarius) 'in obedience to your orders, and after possessing ourselves of a large extent of its territory have also taken

Rome, driving away the barbarians whom we found there, whose captain, Leuderis, we lately sent to you. Owing, however, to the large number of soldiers whom we have had to detach for garrison duty in the various towns of Italy and Sicily which we have taken, our force here is dwindled to 5000 men. The enemy has come against us with an army 150,000 strong; and in the first engagement, when we went out to reconnoitre by the banks of the Tiber, being forced, contrary to our intention, to fight, we were very nearly buried under the multitude of their spears. Then, when the barbarians tried a general assault upon our walls with all their forces and with many engines of war, they were within a little of capturing us and the city at the first rush. Some good fortune however (for one must refer to Fortune not to our valour the accomplishment of a deed which in the nature of things was not to be expected) saved us from their hands.

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'So far however, whether Valour or Fortune have decided the struggle, your affairs have gone as well as could be desired, but I should like that this success should continue in days to come. I will say without concealment what I think you ought now to do, knowing well that human affairs turn out as God wills, but knowing also that those who preside over the destinies of nations are judged according to the event of their enterprises, be that event good or bad. I pray you, then, let arms and soldiers be sent to us in such numbers that we may no longer have to continue the war on terms of such terrible inequality with our enemies. For it is not right to trust everything to Fortune, since if she favours us at one time she will turn her back upon us at another. But I pray you,

BOOK V. CH 8. 537. O Emperor, to let this thought into your mind, that if the barbarians should now vanquish us, not only shall we be driven out of your own Italy and lose our army too, but deep disgrace will accrue to us all as the result of our actions. We shall certainly be thought to have ruined the Romans who have preferred loyalty to your Empire above their own safety. And thus even the good luck which has attended us so far will prove in the end calamitous to our friends. If we had failed in our attempts on Rome, on Campania, or on Sicily, we should only have had the slight mortification of not being able to appropriate the possessions of others. Very different will be our feelings now when we lose what we have learned to look upon as our own, and drag those who have trusted us down into the same abyss of ruin.

'Consider this too, I pray you, that it is only the good-will of the citizens which has enabled us to hold Rome for ever so short a time against the myriads who besiege it. With a wide extent of open country round it, with no access to the sea, shut off from supplies, we could do nothing if the citizens were hostile. They are still animated by friendly feelings towards us, but if their hardships should be greatly prolonged it is only natural that they should choose for themselves the easier lot. For a recently formed friendship like theirs requires prosperity to enable it to endure: and the Romans especially may be compelled by hunger to do many things which are very contrary to their inclination.

'To conclude: I know that I am bound to sacrifice life itself to your Majesty, and therefore no man shall force me, living, from this place. But consider, I pray

you, what kind of fame would accrue to Justinian from such an end to the career of Belisarius [1].'

537. Reinforcements sent from Constantinople.

The effect of this letter was to accelerate the preparations already made for reinforcing the gallant band in Rome. Valerian and Martin had been sent, late in 536, with ships and men to the help of Belisarius, but, fearing to face the winter storms, had lingered on the coast of Aetolia. They now received a message from the Emperor to quicken their movements; and at the same time the spirits of the general and the citizens were raised by the tidings that reinforcements were on their way to relieve them.

Non-combatants sent out of Rome.

On the very next day after the failure of the Gothic assault the unmenaced gates of Rome opened, and a troop of aged men, women, and children, set forth from the city. Some went out by the Appian Gate and along the Appian Way, others went forth by the Porta Portuensis and sailed down the Tiber to the sea. They were accompanied by all the slaves, male and female, except such of the former as Belisarius had impressed for the defence of the walls. Even the soldiers had to part with the servants who generally followed them to war. In thus immediately sending the useless mouths out of Rome Belisarius showed his prompt appreciation of the necessities of his position. He had repelled an assault; he would now guard as well as he might against the dangers of a blockade. Had Witigis been as great a master as Belisarius of the cruel logic of war, he would undoubtedly have prevented the Byzantine general from disencumbering

[1] Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οἶδα θάνατον ὀφείλων τῇ σῇ βασιλείᾳ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ζῶντά με οὐδεὶς ἂν ἐνθένδε ἐξελεῖν δύναιτο. Σκόπει δὲ ὁποίαν σοί ποτε δόξαν ἡ τοιαύτη Βελισαρίου τελευτὴ φέροι (De B. G. i. 24).

BOOK V. CH. 8. 537.

himself of the multitude, who by their necessities would have been the most effectual allies of the Goths inside the city. Imperfect as was the Gothic line of circumvallation, it is impossible to believe that more than 100,000 warriors, including a large body of cavalry, could not by occupying the main roads have prevented at least some of a large and defenceless multitude from escaping, and have driven them back within the walls of Rome. But, in fact, all of them, without fear or molestation, reached the friendly shelter of the cities of Campania, or crossed the straits and took refuge in Sicily.

The Goths occupy Porto.

The fact seems to have been that, except by a series of brave and blundering assaults upon the actual walls of the city, the Goths, or perhaps we should rather say the Gothic King, had no notion how to handle the siege. One right step indeed he took, in view of the now necessary blockade. Three days after the failure of the assault he sent a body of troops to Portus, which they found practically undefended, notwithstanding its massive wall (the ruins of which are still visible), and it was at once occupied by them with a garrison of 1000 men. Procopius is of opinion that even 300 Roman soldiers would have been sufficient to defend Portus, but they could not be spared by Belisarius from the yet more pressing duty of watching on the Roman ramparts. The occupation of Portus caused great inconvenience to the Romans, although they still remained in possession of Ostia and the neighbouring harbour of Antium. From Portus (which since the second century had practically displaced Ostia as the chief emporium of Rome) merchants were accustomed to bring all heavy cargoes up the Tiber in barges

Twenty-first day of the siege.

drawn by oxen, for which there was an excellent tow-path all along the right bank of the river. From Ostia, on the other hand, merchandise had to be brought in skiffs dependent on the favour of the wind, which, owing to the winding character of the river, seldom served them for a straight run from the harbour to the city. BOOK V. CH. 8. 537.

Murder of the hostages.

Besides the occupation of Portus, Witigis could bethink him of no better device to annoy the Romans than the cruel and senseless one of murdering their hostages. He sent orders to Ravenna that all the Senators whom he had confined there at the outbreak of the war should be put to death. A few escaped to Milan, having had some warning of their impending fate. Among them were a certain Cerventinus, and Reparatus a brother of the deacon Vigilius, who was in a few months to become Pope. The others all perished, and with them went the Goth's last chance of ruling the Roman otherwise than by fear.

Timidity of the besiegers.

Meanwhile the Gothic blockade, into which the siege was resolving itself, was of the feeblest and most inefficient kind. Leaving all the praise of dash and daring to the scanty bands of their enemies, the Goths clung timidly to their unwieldy camps, in which no doubt already pestilence was lurking. They never ventured forth by night, seldom except in large companies by day. The light Moorish horsemen were their especial terror. If a Goth wandered forth into the Campagna alone, to cut fodder for his horse or to bring one of the oxen in from pasture, he was almost sure to see one of these children of the desert bearing down upon him. With one cast of the Moor's lance the Goth was slain, his arms and his barbaric adornments were stripped from him, and the Moor was off

BOOK V. Ch. 8. again full speed towards Rome before the avenger could be upon his track.

537. Defence of the walls. Belisarius, on the other hand, organised his defence of the city so thoroughly as to leave as little as possible to the caprice of Fortune. To prevent his own little band of soldiers from being worn out by continual sentinel-duty, especially at night, and at the same time to keep from starvation the Roman proletariat, all of whose ordinary work was stopped by the siege, he instituted a kind of National Guard. He mixed a certain number of these citizen soldiers with his regular troops, paying each of them a small sum for his daily maintenance, and dividing the whole amalgamated force into companies, to each of whom was assigned the duty of guarding a particular portion of the walls by day or by night. To obviate the danger of treachery, these companies were shifted every fortnight to some part of the circuit at a considerable distance from that which they last guarded. After the same interval the keys of every gate of the city were brought to him, melted down and cast afresh with different wards, the locks of course being altered to suit them. The names of the sentinels were entered upon a list which was called over each day. The place of any absent soldier or citizen was at once filled up, and he was summoned to the general's quarters to be punished, perhaps capitally punished, for his delinquency. All the night, bands of music played at intervals along the walls, to keep the defenders awake and to cheer their drooping courage. All night too, the Moors, the terrible Moors, were instructed to prowl round the base of the walls, accompanied by bloodhounds, in order to detect any attempt by the Goths

at a nocturnal escalade. About this time a curious attempt was made, which shows that there was still an undercurrent of the old Paganism in the apparently Christian and Orthodox City. The little square temple of Janus, nearly coeval with the Republic, still stood in the Forum in front of the Senate-house and a little above the *Tria Fata* or temple of the Fates. The temple was all overlaid with brass; of brass was the double-faced statue of Janus, seven and a-half feet high, which stood within it, looking with one face to the rising and with one to the setting sun; of brass were the renowned gates which the Romans of old shut only in time of peace, when all good things abounded, and opened in time of war. Since the citizens of Rome had become zealous above all others in their attachment to Christianity, these gates had been kept equally shut whether peace or war were in the land. Now, however, some secret votaries of the old faith tried, probably under cover of night, to open these brazen gates, that the god might march out as of old to help the Roman armies. They did not succeed in opening wide the massive doors, but they seem to have wrenched them a little from their hinges, so that they would no longer shut tightly as aforetime; an apt symbol of the troubled state of things, neither settled peace nor victorious war, which was for many centuries to prevail in Rome. This evidence of still existing Paganism must have shocked the servants of the pious Justinian; but owing to the troublous state of affairs no enquiry was made as to the authors of the deed[1].

BOOK V. CH. 8.

537. Attempt to open the gates of the temple of Janus.

[1] This temple of Janus—the most celebrated but not the only one in Rome—must have stood a little to the right of the Arch of

BOOK V. CH. 8.

537. Arrival of Imperial reinforcements, about 13 April, 537.

At length, on the forty-first day from the commencement of the siege, the long-looked-for reinforcements under Martin and Valerian arrived in Rome. They were but 1600 men after all, but they were cavalry troops, hardy horsemen from the regions beyond the Danube, Huns, Sclavonians, and Antes[1]; and their arrival brought joy to the heart of Belisarius, who decided that now the time was come for attempting offensive operations against the enemy.

Belisarius orders a sally.

The first sallying party was under the command of Trajan, one of the bodyguard of the General, a brave and capable man. He was ordered to lead forth 200 light-armed horsemen from the Salarian Gate, and to occupy a little eminence near to one of the Gothic camps. There was to be no hand-to-hand fighting; neither sword nor spear was to be used; only each man's bow was to discharge as many arrows as possible, and when these were exhausted the soldiers were to seek safety in flight. These orders were obeyed. Each Roman arrow transfixed some Gothic warrior or his steed. When their quivers were empty, the skirmishers hastened back under the shelter of the walls of the city. The Goths pursued, but soon found themselves within range of the balistae, which were in full activity on the battlements. It was believed in the Roman camp that 1000 of their enemies had been laid low by this day's doings.

Septimius Severus (as one looks towards the Capitol) and a little in front of the Mamertine Prison. No traces whatever of it or of the Tria Fata appear to have been discovered.

[1] A people akin to the Sclavonians, who dwelt at this time, according to Jordanes (De Reb. Get. v), between the Dniester and the Dnieper on the shores of the Black Sea.

537.

Other sallies.

A second sortie under Mundilas and Diogenes and a third under Wilas, all three brave guardsmen of Belisarius, were equally destructive to the enemy, and the result was achieved with equally little cost to the troops, 300 strong in each case, by whom the sortie was effected.

Witigis tries to imitate the Roman tactics.

Seeing the success of these manœuvres, Witigis, who had not yet apprehended the difference of training and equipment between his countrymen and the Imperialists, thought he could not do better than imitate them. Victory was evidently to be had if a general made his army small enough: and he accordingly sent 500 horsemen with orders to go as near as they could to the walls, without coming within range of the balistae, and avenge upon the Romans all the evils which they had suffered at their hands. The Goths accordingly took up their position on a little rising ground; and Belisarius, perceiving them, sent Bessas with 1000 men to steal round and take them in rear. The Goths soon found themselves overmastered: many of them fell; the rest fled to their camp and were upbraided by Witigis for their cowardice. 'Why could not they win a victory with a handful of men as the troops on the other side did?' So did the clumsy workman quarrel with his tools. Three days after he got together another band of 500 men, picking them from each of the Gothic camps that he might be sure to have some valiant men among them, and sent them with the same general directions, 'to do brave deeds against the enemy.' When they drew near, Belisarius sent 1500 horsemen against them under the newly-arrived generals Martin and Valerian. An equestrian battle ensued. Again the

BOOK V. CH. 8. Goths, hopelessly outnumbered, were easily put to flight, and great numbers of them were slain.

537. Cause of the uniform superiority of the Imperialists. Not in the Gothic camp only did this uniform success of the Imperial troops, apparently on the most different lines of encounter, excite much and eager questioning: the Roman citizens, whose former criticisms had given place to abject admiration, attributed it all to the marvellous genius of Belisarius. In the Pincian Palace, however, the question was earnestly debated by the friends of the General. Upon this occasion it was that Belisarius expressed that opinion which has been already quoted[1], that the superiority of the Imperial army in mounted archers[2] was the cause of its unvarying victories over the Goths, whether the battles were fought by larger or smaller bodies of men.

Over-confidence of the Imperial troops. The repeated and brilliant successes of the Imperial troops were almost as embarrassing to Belisarius as to the Gothic King, though in a different way. They fostered both in officers and soldiers such an overweening contempt of the barbarians, that now nothing would satisfy them but to be led forth to a regular pitched battle under the walls of Rome, and make an end once for all of the presumptuous besiegers. The method which Belisarius preferred, and which was far safer, was to wear out the barbarians by an incessant succession of such movements as Shakespeare indicates by 'alarums, excursions.' He dreaded putting Fortune to the test with the whole of his little army at once. He found, however, at last that to keep that army at all in hand it was necessary (as it had been at the battle of Sura) to yield to their wish in

[1] See p. 7.

[2] ἱπποτοξόται.

this thing; and he indulged the hope that their confidence of victory might be one powerful factor in the process which would enable him to secure it. Still he would have made his grand attack somewhat by way of a surprise, but was foiled in this endeavour by the information given by deserters to the Goths. At length, therefore, he resigned himself to fight a regular pitched battle with full notice on either side. The customary harangues were delivered by each commander. Belisarius reminded his soldiers that this battle was one of their own seeking, and that they would have to justify the advice which they had ventured to give, and to maintain the credit of their previous victories, by their conduct on that day. He bade them not spare either horse or javelin or bow in the coming fray, since all such losses should be abundantly made up to them out of his military stores. The purport of the speech of Witigis—if Procopius's account of it be not a mere rhetorical exercise—was to assure his brethren in arms that it was no selfish care for his crown and dignity which made him the humble suitor for their best assistance on that day. 'For the loss of life or kingship I care not; nay, I would pray to put off this purple robe to-day if only I were assured that it would hang upon Gothic shoulders to-morrow. Even Theodahad's end seems to me an enviable one, since he died by Gothic hands and lost life and power by the same stroke. But what I cannot bear to contemplate is ruin falling not only on me but on my race. I think of the calamity of the Vandals, and imagine that I see you and your sons carried away into captivity, your wives suffering the last indignities from our implacable foes, myself

Preparations for a pitched battle.

Speech of Belisarius.

Speech of Witigis.

BOOK V. CH. 8. 537. and my wife, the grand-daughter of the great Theodoric, led whithersoever the insulting conqueror shall please to order. Think of all these things, my countrymen, and vow in your own hearts that you will die on this field of battle rather than they shall come to pass. If this be your determination, an easy victory is yours. Few in number are the enemy, and after all they are but Greeks and Greek-like people. The only thing which keeps them together is a vain confidence derived from some recent disasters of ours. Be true to yourselves, and you will soon shatter that confidence and inflict a signal punishment upon them for all the insults that we have received at their hands.'

Arrangement of the Gothic troops.

After this harangue Witigis drew up his army in line of battle, the infantry in the middle, the cavalry on either wing. He stationed them as near as might be to the Gothic camps, in order that when the Romans were defeated, as he made no doubt they would be, owing to their enormous inferiority in numbers, their long flight to the shelter of their walls might be as disastrous to them as possible.

Dispositions made by Belisarius. Double attack.

Belisarius on his side determined to make his real attack from the Pincian and Salarian Gates. At the same time a feigned attack towards the Gothic camp under Monte Mario was to be made from the Porta Aurelia and the neighbourhood of the Tomb of Hadrian. The object of this feigned attack was of course to prevent the large number of Goths on the right bank of the Tiber from swarming across the Milvian Bridge to the assistance of their brethren. Strict orders were, however, given to Valentine, who commanded the troops in this quarter, on no account to advance really within fighting distance of the

enemy, but to harass him with a perpetual apparent offer of battle never leading to a decided result. BOOK V. CH. 8.

In further pursuance of the same policy the General accepted the service of a large number of volunteers from among the mechanics of Rome, equipped them with shield and spear, and stationed them in front of the Pancratian Gate. He placed no reliance on the services of these men for actual fighting, utterly unused as they were to the art of war, but he reckoned, not without cause, on the effect which the sight of so large a body of men would have in preventing the Goths from quitting their camp under Monte Mario. Meanwhile, the orders to the mechanic-volunteers were, not to stir till they should receive the signal from him, a signal which he was fully determined never to give. 537. The citizen army.

The battle, according to the original plan of Belisarius, was to be fought entirely with cavalry, the arm in which he knew himself to be strongest, many of his best foot-soldiers, who were already well-skilled in horsemanship, having provided themselves with horses at the expense of the enemy, and so turned themselves into cavalry. He feared too the instability of such infantry as he had, and their liability to sudden panics, and therefore determined to keep them near to the fosse of the City walls, there to act simply as a slight support for any of the cavalry who might chance to be thrown into confusion. This intention was changed at the last moment—the General was in a mood that day for receiving advice from all quarters—by the earnest representations of two valiant Asiatic highlanders, Principius a Pisidian, and Tarmutus an Isaurian, whose brother Ennes commanded the contingent of those Battle to be a cavalry battle. The plan changed.

BOOK V. CH. 8.

537. Advice of Principius and Tarmutus.

hardy mountaineers. These men besought him not further to lessen the numbers of his gallant little army by withdrawing the foot-soldiers, the representatives of those mighty legions by which 'the Romans of old' had won their greatness, from active service. They asserted their conviction that if, in recent engagements, the infantry had done something less than their duty, the fault lay not with the common soldiers but with the officers, who insisted on being mounted, and who were, too often, only looking about for a favourable moment for flight. Thus the troops were discouraged, because they felt that the men who were giving them orders did not share their dangers. But if Belisarius would allow these horsemen officers to fight that day with the horsemen, and would allow *them*, Principius and Tarmutus, to share on foot the dangers of the men under their command, and with them to advance boldly against the enemy, they trusted with God's help to do some deeds against them that the world should wot of. Belisarius for long would not yield. He loved the two valiant highlanders: he was loth to run the risk of losing them: he was also loth to run the risk of losing his little army of foot-soldiers. At length, however, he consented. He left the smallest possible number of soldiers to guard, with the help of the Roman populace, the machines on the battlements and at the gates: and placing the main body of his infantry under the command of Principius and Tarmutus, he gave them orders to march behind the cavalry against the enemy. Should any portion of the cavalry be put to flight they were to open their ranks and let them pass through, themselves engaging the enemy till the horsemen had time to re-form.

BOOK V. CH. 8.

537.

Battle at the Pincian and Salarian Gates.

It was felt on both sides that this was to be a decisive trial of strength. Witigis had put in battle array every man of his army available for service, leaving in the camps only the camp-followers and the men who were disabled by their wounds. Early in the morning the hostile ranks closed for battle. The troops in front of the Pincian and Salarian Gates soon got the upper hand of the enemy, among whose clustered masses their arrows fell with terrible effect. But the Gothic multitudes were too thick, and the men too stout-hearted for even this slaughter to produce complete rout. As one rank of the barbarians was mown down, another pressed forward to supply its place. Thus the Romans, who had slowly pressed forward, found themselves by noon close to the Gothic camp, but surrounded still by so compact a body of their foes that they began to feel that any pretext which would enable them to return in good order under the shelter of their walls would be a welcome thing. The heroes of this period of the struggle were an Isaurian guardsman named Athenodorus and two Cappadocians, Theodoret and Georgius, who darted forth in front of the Roman line and with their spears transfixed many of the enemy. Thus again the men who came from the rough sides of Mount Taurus showed themselves conspicuous among the most warlike spirits of the Imperial army.

Battle under Monte Mario.

While this hot strife was being waged on the north-east of the City, strange events were taking place on the other side of the river in the Neronian plain under Monte Mario. Here the Gothic general Marcias had been enjoined by his King to play a waiting game, and above all things to watch the Milvian Bridge in

BOOK V. CH. 8. 537. order that no Romans should cross by it to succour their countrymen. The Romans, it will be remembered, had received a similar order from their general, and it might therefore have been expected that there would be no battle. But as the day wore on, it chanced that one of the feigned assaults of the Roman troops was turned into a real one by the sudden giving way of the Gothic ranks. The flying Goths were unable to reach their camp, but turned and re-formed upon one of the hills in the neighbourhood of the Monte Mario. Among the Roman troops were many sailors and slaves acting the soldier for the first time, and ignorant of discipline. Possibly, though this is not expressly stated, some of the mechanic crew who were stationed in front of the Pancratian Gate joined in the pursuit. At any rate the successful Romans soon became quite unmanageable by their leaders. The loudly-shouted commands of their general, Valentine, were unheard or disregarded. They did not concern themselves with the slaughter of the flying Goths. They did not press on to seize and cross the Milvian Bridge, in which case their opportune assistance to Belisarius might almost have enabled him to end the war at a stroke. They only occupied themselves with the plunder of the Gothic camp, where silver vessels and many other precious things (evidences of the enriching effect of the long peace on the Ostrogothic warriors) attracted their greedy eyes. The natural consequence followed. The Goths, so long left unmolested, and leisurely re-forming on Monte Mario, looked on for a time quietly at the plunder of their camp. Then taking heart from their long reprieve, and reading the signs of disorder in the hostile forces, they dashed on with a savage yell,

leaped the ramparts of their camp, and scattered the invaders of it like chaff before the wind. Silver vessels and golden trappings, all the spoils for the sake of which the greedy crew had sacrificed the chance of a splendid victory, were dashed in terror to the ground, while the slaves and sailors dressed up in military garb fled on all sides in utter rout and confusion from the camp, or fell by hundreds under the Gothic sword. The day's fighting on the Neronian Plain had been a series of blunders on both sides, but the eventual victory rested with the side which made fewest, Marcias and his Goths.

BOOK V. CH. 8.

537.

General rout of the imperial army.

At the same time the fortunes of the Imperial army on the north-east of the city began to decline. The Goths, driven to bay at the rampart of their camp, formed a *testudo* with their shields and succeeded in withstanding the Roman onset, and in slaying many men and many horses. The smallness of the attacking army became more and more terribly apparent both to itself and the enemy; and at length the right wing of the Gothic cavalry, bending round, charged the Romans in flank. They broke and fled. The cavalry reached the ranks of the supporting infantry, who did not support them, but turned and fled likewise; and soon the whole Roman army, horse and foot, generals and common soldiers, were in headlong flight toward the City walls.

Death of Principius and Tarmutus.

Like Nolan at the charge of Balaklava, Principius and Tarmutus atoned by a brave death for the disastrous counsels which in all good faith they had given to the General. With a little knot of faithful friends they for a time arrested the headlong torrent of the Gothic pursuit, and the delay thus caused saved

BOOK V. CH. 8. 537. numberless lives in the Imperial army. Then Principius fell, hacked to pieces by countless wounds, and forty-two of his brave foot-soldiers fell around him. Tarmutus with two Isaurian javelins in his hand long kept the enemy at bay. He found his strength failing him, and was just about to sink down in exhaustion, when a charge of his brother Ennes, at the head of some of his cavalry, gave him a few moments' relief. Then plucking up heart again, he shook himself loose from his pursuers and ran at full speed (he was ever swift of foot) towards the walls of the City. He reached the Pincian Gate, pierced with many wounds and bedabbled with gore, but still holding his two Isaurian javelins in his hand. At the gate he fell down fainting. His comrades thought him dead, but laid him on a shield and bore him into the City. He was not dead, however: he still breathed; but two days afterwards he expired of his wounds, leaving a name memorable to the whole army, but especially to his trusty Isaurian comrades.

The fugitives under the shelter of the balistae.

The soldiers who had already entered the City shut the gates with a clash, and refused to let the fugitives enter, lest the Goths should enter with them. Panic-stricken, and with scarcely a thought of self-defence, the defeated soldiers huddled up under the shelter of the walls, their spears all broken or cast away in the flight, their bows useless by reason of the dense masses in which they were packed together. The Goths appeared in menacing attitude at the outer edge of the fosse. Had they poured down across it, as they were at first minded to, they might have well-nigh annihilated the army of Belisarius. But when they saw the citizens and the soldiers within the City

clustering more thickly upon the walls, afraid of the terrible balistae they retired, indulging only in the luxury of taunts and epithets of barbarian scorn hurled at the beaten army.

The events of the day had fully justified the intuitive judgment of Belisarius. The besieged, though terrible in skirmishes and sudden excursions, were too few in number for a pitched battle. 'The fight,' says Procopius, 'which began at the camps of the barbarians ended in the trench and close to the walls of the City[1].'

The Imperial army revert to their former tactics.

After this disastrous day the Imperial troops reverted to their old method of unexpected sallies by small bodies of troops, and practised it with much of their former success. There is something of a Homeric, something of a mediaeval character in the stories which Procopius tells us of this period of the siege. No masses of troops were engaged on either side. Infantry were unused, save that a few bold and fleet-footed soldiers generally accompanied the horsemen. Single combats between great champions on horseback on either side were the order of the day.

Brave deeds of Chorsamantis.

Thus in one sally the general Bessas transfixed three of the bravest of the Gothic horsemen in succession with his spear, and with little aid from his followers put the rest of their squadron to flight. Thus also Chorsamantis, a Hun and one of the body-guard of Belisarius, in a charge on the Neronian Plain pursued too far, and was separated from his comrades. Seeing this the Goths closed round him, but he, standing on his defence, slew the foremost of their band. They wavered and fled before him. Drawing near to the walls of their camp and feeling that the eyes of their

[1] Here ends the First Book of the Gothic War of Procopius.

BOOK V. Ch. 8.

537.

fellows were upon them, they turned, for very shame that so many should be chased by one. Again he slew their bravest, and again they fled. Thus he pursued them up to the very gates of the camp, and then returned across the plain unharmed. Soon after, in another combat, a Gothic arrow pierced his left thigh, penetrating even to the bone. The army surgeons insisted upon a rest of several days after so grave an injury, but the sturdy barbarian bore with impatience so long a seclusion from the delights of battle, and was often heard to murmur, 'I will make those Gothic fellows pay for my wounded leg.' Before long the wound healed and he was out of the doctors' hands. One day at the noontide meal, according to his usual custom, he became intoxicated, and determined that he would sally forth alone against the enemy, and, as he said over and over again to himself in the thick tones of a drunkard, 'make them pay for my leg.' Riding down to the Pincian Gate he declared that he was sent by the General to go forth against the enemy. The sentinels, not daring to challenge the assertion of one of the body-guard of Belisarius, and perhaps not perceiving his drunken condition, allowed him to pass through the gate. When the Goths saw a solitary figure riding forth from the city their first thought was 'Here comes a deserter,' but the bent bow and flying arrows of Chorsamantis soon undeceived them. Twenty of them came against him, whom he easily dispersed. He rode leisurely forward to the camp. The Romans from the ramparts, not recognising who he was, took him for some madman. Soon he was surrounded by the outstreaming Goths, and after performing prodigies of valour fell dead amid a ring of

slaughtered enemies, leaving a name to be celebrated for many a day in the camp-fire songs of his savage countrymen. BOOK V. CH. 8. 537.

In reading this and many similar stories told us by Procopius we are of course bound to remember that we do not hear the Gothic accounts of their own exploits, accounts which might sometimes exhibit a Gothic champion chasing scores of flying Byzantines. But after making all needful abatement on this account, we shall probably be safe in supposing that the balance of hardihood, of wild reckless daring, was on the side of the Imperial army. Though the members of it called themselves Romans they were really for the most part, like Chorsamantis, barbarians, fresher from the wilderness than the Ostrogothic soldiers, every one of whom had been born and bred amid the delights of Italy. And the stern stuff of which the Imperial soldiers were made was tempered and pointed by what still remained of Roman discipline, and driven by the matchless skill of Belisarius straight to the heart of the foe.

Constantine and his Huns.

On another occasion the general Constantine, perhaps desiring to vie with the achievements of his rival Bessas, sallied out with a small body of Huns from the Porta Aurelia and found himself surrounded by a large troop of the enemy. To preserve himself from being attacked on all sides he retreated with his men into one of the narrow streets opening on Nero's Stadium [1].

[1] The exact position of this 'Stadium of Nero' does not seem to be clearly ascertained. Canina (Edifizi, iii. 54) makes it the same building as the Cajanum or Stadium of Caligula and places it on the site of the Vatican Palace. We might have thought this too lofty a position for a building which was ἐν Νέρωνος πεδίῳ: but Procopius seems to apply this term (equivalent to *Campus*

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Here his men, dismounting, discharged their arrows at the enemy, who menaced them from the opposite ends of the street. The Goths thought, 'Their quivers must soon be empty, and then we will rush in upon them from both sides and destroy them.' But such was the deadly effect of the Hunnish missiles that the Goths found before long that their number was reduced more than one half. Night was closing in. They were seized with panic and fled. The pursuing Huns still aimed their deadly arrows at the backs of the flying foe. Thus after effecting a frightful slaughter among the Goths, Constantine with his 'Massagetic' horsemen returned in safety to Rome that night [1].

The Roman and the Goth in the Corn-magazine.

At another time it befell that Peranius, the general who came from the slopes of Caucasus, headed a sortie from the Salarian Gate. It was at first successful, and the Goths fled before the Romans. Then, when the sun was going down, the tide of battle turned. An Imperial soldier flying headlong before the Goths fell unawares into an underground vault prepared by 'the Romans of old' as a magazine for corn. Unable to climb the steep sides of the vault, and afraid to call for help, he passed all night in that confinement, in evil case. Next day another Roman sortie, more successful than the last, sent the Goths flying over the same tract of country, and lo! a Gothic soldier fell headlong into the same vault. The two companions in misfortune began to consult as to their means of escape, and bound themselves by solemn vows each to be as careful

Neronianus), to a large tract of country on the right bank of the Tiber, stretching from the Ponte Molle to St. Peter's.

[1] Procopius, De B. G. ii. 1. This is one of the many passages which show that Procopius uses the name *Massagetae* as equivalent to Huns.

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for his companion's safety as his own. Then they both sent up a tremendous shout, which was heard, as it chanced, by a band of Gothic soldiers. They came, they peeped over the mouth of the vault, and asked in Gothic tongue who ever was shouting from that darksome hole. The Goth alone replied, told his tale, and begged his comrades to deliver him from that horrible pit. They let down ropes into the vault, the ropes were made fast, they hauled up a man out of the pit, and to their astonishment a Roman soldier stood before them. The Roman—who had sagaciously argued that if his companion came up first no Gothic soldiers would trouble themselves to haul up *him*—explained the strange adventure and besought them to lower the ropes again for their own comrade. They did so, and when the Goth was drawn up he told them of his plighted faith, and entreated them to let his companion in danger go free. They complied, and the Roman returned unharmed to the City. As Ariosto sings of Ferraù and Rinaldo, when those fierce enemies agreed to roam together in search of Angelica, who was beloved by both of them,—

> 'O gran bontà de' cavalieri antiqui!
> Eran rivali, eran di fè diversi,
> E si sentian degli aspri colpi iniqui,
> Per tutta la persona anco dolersi;
> E pur per selve oscure, e calli obliqui
> Insieme van, senza aspetto aversi[1].'

[1] 'Oh loyal knights of that long vanished day!
Their faiths were two, they wooed one woman's smile,
And still they felt rude tokens of their fray,
The blows which each on other rained erewhile:
Yet through dark woods by paths that seemed to stray
They rode, and each nor feared nor harboured guile.'
(Orlando Furioso, i. 22.)

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A breath of the age of chivalry seems wafted over the savage battle-field, as we read of the vow between the two deadly enemies in the vault so loyally observed, and we half persuade ourselves that we perceive another *aura* from that still future age when men everywhere, recognising that they have all fallen into the same pit of ruin and longing for deliverance, shall listen to the voice of the Divine Reconciler, 'Sirs, ye are brethren: why do ye wrong one to another?'

Euthalius brings pay to the Imperialists.

The month of June was now begun. The combatants had reached the third month of the siege and had finished two years of the war. A certain Euthalius had landed at Tarracina[1] bringing from Byzantium some much-needed treasure for the pay of the soldiers.

Skirmish to cover his entrance.

In order to secure for him and for his escort of 100 men a safe entrance at nightfall into the city, Belisarius harassed the enemy through the long summer's day with incessant expectations of attack, expectations which, after the soldiers had taken their mid-day meal, were converted into realities. As usual the attacks were made on both sides, from the Pincian Gate and over the Neronian Plain. At the former place the Romans were commanded by three of Belisarius's guards, the Persian Artasines, Buchas the Hun, and Cutila the Thracian. The tide of war rolled backwards and forwards many times, and many succours poured forth both from the City and from the Gothic camp, over both of which the shouts and the din of battle resounded. At length the Romans prevailed, and drove back their foes.

Stoicism of Cutila and Arzes.

In this action the splendid contempt of pain shown by Cutila and by a brother-guardsman Arzes greatly impressed the mind

[1] On the Appian Way, sixty-two miles from Rome.

of Procopius. Cutila had been wounded by a javelin which lodged in his skull. He still took part in the fight, and at sunset rode back with his comrades to the City, the javelin nodding to and fro in his head with every movement of his body. Arzes had received a Gothic arrow at the angle of the eye and nose, which came with such violence that it almost penetrated to the nape of his neck. He too rode back to Rome, like Cutila apparently heedless of the weapon which was shaking in the wound.

Exploits of Buchas.

Meanwhile things were going ill with Martin and Valerian, who commanded the Imperial troops on the Neronian Plain. They were surrounded by large numbers of the enemy, and seemed on the point of being overwhelmed by them. At this crisis—it was now growing late—an opportune charge under Buchas the Hun, withdrawn for this purpose from the sortie on the other side of the city, saved the day. Buchas himself performed prodigies of valour. For a long time he alone, though still but a stripling, kept twelve of the enemy at bay. At length one Goth was able to deal him a slight wound under the right arm-pit, and another, a more serious wound, transversely, through the muscles of the thigh. By this time, however, he and his men had restored the fortunes of the Imperial troops. Valerian and Martin rode up with speed, scattered the barbarians who surrounded Buchas, and led him home between them, each holding one of his reins.

Euthalius and the treasure escorted into the City.

The object of all this bloody skirmishing was attained. Euthalius with the treasure, creeping along the Appian Way, stole at nightfall, unperceived, into the City. When all were returned within the walls,

BOOK V. CH. 8. 537. the wounded heroes were of course attended to; and Procopius, insatiable in his desire to widen his experience of human life, seems to have visited the surgical wards. The case of Arzes, who was looked upon as one of the bravest men in the household of Belisarius, gave the surgeons much anxious thought. To save the sight of the eye they held to be altogether impossible; but moreover they feared that the laceration of the multitude of nerves through which the arrow must be drawn, if it were extracted, would

The life of Arzes saved.

cause the death of the patient. A physician, Theoctistus by name, pressed his finger on the nape of his neck and asked if that gave him pain. When Arzes replied that it did, Theoctistus gave him the glad assurance, 'Then we shall be able to save your life and your eye too.' At once cutting off the feather end of the arrow where it projected from the face, the surgeons dissected the comparatively unsensitive tissues at the end of the neck till they grasped the triangular point of the arrow, and drawing it out endways gave the patient but little pain and left him with his eye uninjured and his face unscarred. The

Death of Cutila and Buchas.

cases of Cutila and Buchas terminated less favourably. When the javelin was drawn from the head of the former he fainted. Inflammation of the membranes of the brain[1] set in, followed by delirium, and he died not many days after. Buchas also died after three days, of the terrible hemorrhage from his wounded thigh. The physicians assured Procopius that had the lance penetrated straight in, his life might have been preserved, but the transverse wound was fatal.

The deaths of these heroes filled the Roman army

[1] Ἐπεὶ δέ οἱ φλεγμαίνειν οἱ τῇδε μήνιγγες ἤρξαντο.

with sorrow, which was only mitigated by the sounds of lamentation arising from the Gothic camp. These bewailings, not previously heard after much fiercer encounters, were due to the exalted rank of the warriors who had fallen by the sword of Buchas. BOOK V. CH. 8. 537. Gothic lamentations.

Such were some of the sallies and skirmishes which occurred in this memorable siege. Sixty-nine encounters in all took place, and Procopius wisely remarks that it is not needful for him to give the details of all of them. He himself, as we shall soon see, left the scene of action for a time; and for some months of the remainder of the siege we miss the minute descriptive touches (though some readers may find them tedious) which reveal the personal presence of the historian in the earlier acts of the great drama.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLOCKADE.

Authorities.

Sources:—

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537.

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, ii. 3–10.

For Papal history, the so-called Anastasius Bibliothecarius, Vita Silverii (apud Muratori, iii. 129–130), and the Breviarium of Liberatus, cap. xxii.

The Campaign of Famine, 1632.

IN the terrible struggle of the Thirty Years' War there was a memorable interlude when Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein watched one another for eleven weeks before the walls of Nuremberg, the Swede in vain attempting to storm the intrenchments of the Bohemian, the Bohemian hoping that famine and pestilence would force the Swede to move off and leave Nuremberg to his mercy. That 'Campaign of Famine' was virtually a drawn game. Gustavus was forced to evacuate his position, but Wallenstein's army was so weakened by hunger and disease that he had to leave the famine-stricken city unattacked.

Doubtful issue of the contest.

Somewhat similar to this was the position of the two armies that now struggled for the possession of Rome. It was clear that the Goths could not carry the defences of the City by simply rushing up to them in undisciplined valour with their rude engines of war,

and seeking to swarm over them. It was equally clear that the little band of Belisarius could not beat off the enemy by a pitched battle on the plains of the Campagna. The siege must therefore become a mere blockade, and the question was which party in the course of this blockade would be soonest exhausted. In the course of the Crimean War a Russian diplomatist uttered the famous saying, 'My master has three good generals, and their names are January, February, and March.' Even so in the dread conflict that was impending, two spectral forms, each marshalling a grim and shadowy army, were to stalk around the walls of the City and the six camps of the Goths. They would fight on both sides, but the terrible question for Belisarius and for Witigis was, to which side would they lend the more effectual aid. The names of these two invisible champions were *Limos* and *Loimos* (Famine and Pestilence).

The intersection of the aqueducts fortified by the Goths.

Recognising the changed character of the siege, Witigis took one step which he would have done well to have taken three months before, towards completing the blockade of Rome. About three-and-a-half miles from the City[1] there is a point now marked by a picturesque mediaeval tower called Torre Fiscale, where two great lines of aqueducts cross one another, run for about 500 yards side by side, and then cross again. The lofty arcade of the Anio Novus and Claudia is one of these lines, running at first to the south of its companion, then north, and then south again. The other is the arcade of the Marcian, Tepulan, and Julian

[1] Procopius says fifty stadia, but his memory has clearly played him false. Torre Fiscale is a little less than thirty stadia from Rome.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537. waters, which has been used by Pope Sixtus V as the support of his hastily-constructed aqueduct, the Aqua Felice. Even now, in their ruined state, these long rows of lofty arches, crossing and re-crossing one another, wear an aspect of solemn strength; and were a battle to be fought over this ground to-day they might play no unimportant part in the struggle of the contending armies. Here then the Goths, filling up the lower arches with clay and rubble, fashioned for themselves a fortress, rude perchance, but of considerable strength. They placed in it a garrison of 7000 men, who commanded not only the Via Latina (which was absolutely close to the aqueducts), but also the Via Appia[1] (which runs nearly parallel to the Latina at about a mile's distance), so effectually that the transport of provisions to Rome along either of those roads seems to have become practically impossible.

Discouragement in the city.

When the citizens saw these two great roads to the south blocked, discouragement began to fill their hearts. They had long looked forward to the month of Quintilis[2]—that month which also bore the name of the great Julius, and in which they had celebrated for a thousand years the victory of the Lake Regillus—as the month of their deliverance from the Goths; and indeed a prophecy of the Sibyl was in circulation among the remnant of the Patricians which intimated

Sibylline prophecy.

[1] Procopius says that the intersection of the aqueducts was between the Appian and Latin Ways. This, however, must be a slight lapse of memory on his part, like his overstatement of the distance from Rome, since Torre Fiscale is actually upon the Via Latina or quite close to it. S. Lanciani assures me that there is no place *precisely* answering to the description by Procopius at all suitable for the purpose.

[2] July.

not very obscurely that this should come to pass[1]. Yet Quintilis with its burning heat had come, was passing away, and still the yellow-haired barbarians clustered about the walls. So long as the crops stood BOOK V. CH. 9. 537.

[1] 'And in Rome certain of the Patricians produced oracles of the Sibyl affirming that the danger of the city should continue only till the month of July. For then a king was to arise for the Romans, by whose means the Getic fear was to be removed in future from Rome. But the Getae mean the Goths. This was how the oracle ran:— Procopius on the Sibylline prophecies.

ΗΝΤΙ ΥΙΟΙΜΕΝ ΖΕ (ΚΑΙ) ΙΒΕΝΥΩ (ΚΑΙ) ΚΑΤΕ
ΝΗΣΙ ΓΡ ΣΟΕΝΙΠΠΗΥ ΕΤΙ ΣΟ ΠΙΑΠΙΕΤΑ'

(De B. G. i. 24; p. 117.)

[Comparetti says on this passage, 'Only in the Vatican codices is any trace preserved of the original Latin script, in great measure transformed by the copyists into Greek characters. In V (the best Vatican MS.) we read:—

ΗΝΤΙ hοιμενϥεϥιβε |
ΝUΜϥμλΤΙΗΝΡσΕΝΙΠΙΗV |
ΕΤΙCΥΠΙΑΤΑΖΤΕΤ

The same with somewhat greater corruption is read in U and W (the two other Vatican MSS.). In all the other codices the writing is entirely Greek (as above, with slight variations). He deciphers it thus—Quintili mense sub novo Romanus rege nihil Geticum jam metuet.']

Procopius goes on to explain that Quintilis meant July, but, as he says, the whole prophecy was fallacious, for no deliverance was wrought in that month; no king arose to save Rome; and afterwards she suffered as much 'Getic terror' under Totila as she had ever done under Witigis. But, he continues, it is quite impossible to understand any prophecy of the Sibyl till after the event. For she observes no order in her predictions, but rushes about so wildly from Libya to Persia and from Rome to Assyria, and then from Assyria darts off so strangely to describe the sufferings of Britain, that it is quite beyond the human intellect to understand her meaning till time has made it clear. This last hint that the Sibylline prophecies included Britain is important (καὶ πάλιν ἀμφὶ Ῥωμαίοις μαντευομένη προλέγει τὰ Βρεττανῶν πάθη).

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537. Famine beginning.

in the Campagna some slight mitigation of the impending famine was afforded by bands of daring horsemen who rode forth at nightfall, hurriedly reaped the standing ears, laid them on their horses' backs, and galloped back to Rome to sell the furtive harvest at a high price to the wealthy citizens. But now even this resource was beginning to fail, and all the citizens, rich and poor alike, were being reduced to live on the grass which, as Procopius remarks, always, in winter and summer alike, covers with its green robe the land of the Romans. For animal food the resource of the moment was to make a kind of sausage out of the flesh of the army-mules which had died of disease. Thus was the General, *Limos*, beginning to show himself in great force on the side hostile to Rome.

Deputation from the citizens to Belisarius

Belisarius, who was already sorely harassed by the daily increasing difficulties of commissariat, had the additional vexation of receiving, one day, an embassy from the hunger-stricken Romans. They told him in plain words that the patriotism and the loyalty to the Empire, on which they prided themselves when they opened to him the gates of the city, now seemed to them the extremity of foolishness. They felt that they were

'Cursed with the burden of a granted prayer,'

and longed for nothing so much as to be put back into the same happy state they were in, before a soldier from Byzantium showed his face among them. But that now could never be. Their estates in the country round were wasted. The city was so shut up that none of the necessaries of life could enter it. Many of their fellow-citizens were already dead; and upon these they thought with envy, wishing that they could

be laid quietly underground beside them. Hunger made them bold to speak thus to the mighty Belisarius. Hunger made every other evil that they had ever endured seem light. The thought of death by hunger made any other mode of death seem a delightful prospect. In one word, let him lead them forth against the enemy, and they promised that he should not find them fail from his side in the stress of battle. BOOK V. CH. 9. 537.

Answer of Belisarius.

With a haughty smile and a profession of equanimity which masked his real discouragement, Belisarius replied: 'I have expected all the events that have occurred in this siege, and among them some such proposal as this of yours. I know what the populace is; fickle, easily discouraged, always ready to suggest impossible enterprises, and to throw away real advantages. I have no intention, however, of complying with your counsels, and so sacrificing the interests of my master and your lives as well. We do not make war in this way by a series of ill-considered, spasmodic efforts. War is a matter of calm and serious calculation, and my calculations of the game tell me that to wait is our present policy. You are anxious to hazard all upon a single throw of the dice, but it is not my habit to take any such short cuts to success. You announce that you are willing to go with me to battle. Pray when did you learn your drill? Have you never heard that a certain amount of practice is necessary to enable men to fight; and do you imagine that the enemy will be kind enough to wait while you are learning how to use your weapons? Still, I thank you for your readiness to fight, and I praise the martial spirit which now animates you. To explain to you some of my reasons for delay, I will inform you that the largest

Reinforcements promised.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537.

armament ever sent forth by the Empire has been collected by Justinian out of every land, and is now covering the Ionian Gulf and the Campanian shore. In a few days I trust they will be with us, relieving your necessities by the supplies which they will bring, and burying the barbarians under the multitude of their darts. Now retire. I forgive you for the impatience which you have shown, and I proceed to my arrangements for hastening the arrival of the reinforcements.'

Procopius despatched to Naples.

Having with these boastful words revived the spirits of the Romans, the General despatched the trusty Procopius to Naples to find out what truth there might be in the rumours of coming help. The historian set out at nightfall, escorted by the guardsman Mundilas with a small body of horse. The little party stole out of the Porta San Paolo, escaped the notice of the Gothic garrison at Torre Fiscale, and felt themselves, before long, past the danger of pursuit by the barbarians. Procopius then dismissed his escort and proceeded unattended to Naples. Soon the General's wife Antonina followed him thither, under the escort of Martin and Trajan, partly in order that Belisarius might know that she was in a place of safety, but also that her considerable administrative talents might be employed in organising expeditions of relief. Certainly they did not find that vast Byzantine host darkening all the bays of Magna Graecia of which Belisarius had bragged to the Roman populace. But they did find in Campania a considerable number of unemployed cavalry[1]; they also found that it was possible safely

Antonina in Naples.

[1] I do not quite understand what Procopius means when he says (p. 159) that these men ἢ ἵππων φυλακῆς ἕνεκα ἢ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν ἐνταῦθα λελεῖφθαι.

to diminish some of the Campanian and Apulian garrisons, and above all, as the Romans had command of the sea, it was easy to collect a goodly number of well-loaded provision-ships. Procopius alone, before he was joined by Antonina, had forwarded five hundred soldiers to Rome, together with a great number of provision-ships, which possibly unloaded their cargoes at Ostia. BOOK V. CH. 9. 537.

During the time, probably lasting four months (July to November), that Procopius was engaged on this important mission, we miss (as has been already remarked) all the minutely graphic touches of his pen as to the siege of Rome, and these are not compensated by much that is interesting as to his stay at Neapolis. He saw there the remains of a fine mosaic picture of Theodoric which had been set up in that monarch's reign[1]. Apparently the cement with which the little coloured stones were fastened to the wall was badly made. The head had fallen shortly before Theodoric's death; eight years after, the breast and belly had fallen, and Athalaric had died a few days afterward. The fall of the part representing the loins had preceded only by a little space the murder of Amalasuntha. And now the legs and feet had also fallen, evidently showing that the whole Gothic monarchy was shortly to come to an end. The Mosaic of Theodoric.

It was at this time also that Procopius studied the volcanic phenomena of Vesuvius, whose sullen caprices he describes very much in the language that would be used by a modern traveller. When he was there the mountain was bellowing in its well-known savage style, but had not yet begun to fling up its lava-stream; Procopius describes Vesuvius.

[1] De B. G. I. 24.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537. though this was daily expected. The upper part was excessively steep, the lower densely wooded. In the summit there was a cave so deep that it seemed to reach down to the very roots of the mountain, and in that cave, if one dared to bend over and look in, one could see the fire. People still kept alive the remembrance of the great eruption of 472 [1], even as they now speak with awe of the eruption which occurred exactly fourteen centuries later, and point out to the traveller the wide-wasting desolation caused by the 'lava di settanta due.' In that earlier eruption the light volcanic stones were carried as far as Constantinople, so alarming the citizens that (as was mentioned in the last volume [2]) an annual ceremony (something like the Rogations in the Church at Vienne) was instituted for deliverance from this peril. In another eruption the stones were carried as far as Tripoli in Africa. But Vesuvius upon the whole had not an evil reputation. The husbandmen had observed that when it was in a state of activity their crops of all kinds were more abundant than in other years: and the fine pure air of the mountain was deemed so conducive to health that physicians sent consumptive patients to dwell upon its flanks.

Belisarius begins to hem in the Goths. Leaving Procopius and Antonina at Naples, we return with their escorts to Rome. Great joy was brought to the citizens when Mundilas reported that the Appian Way was practically clear by night, the Goths not venturing to stir far from their aqueduct fortress after sunset. Belisarius hence inferred that while still postponing a general engagement he might

[1] The date is fixed by Marcellinus Comes (Roncalli, ii. 296).

[2] Vol. iii. p. 411.

adopt a somewhat bolder policy with the enemy, a policy which would make them besieged as well as besiegers. Martin and Trajan, after they had escorted Antonina on the road to Naples, were directed to take up their quarters at Tarracina. Gontharis and a band of Herulians occupied the yet nearer post of Albano, situated, like Tarracina, on the Appian Way, but at only one-fourth of the distance from Rome[1]. BOOK V. CH. 9. 537.

Tivoli occupied.

Albano, it is true, was before long taken by the Goths, but the general policy of encompassing, harassing, and virtually besieging the besiegers remained successful. Magnus, one of the generals of cavalry, and Sinthues, another of the brave guardsmen of Belisarius, were sent up the Anio valley to Tibur. They occupied and repaired the old citadel which stood where Tivoli now stands, surrounded by the steaming cascades of Anio, and, from this coign of vantage, by their frequent excursions grievously harassed the barbarians, whose reserves were perhaps quartered not far from the little town. In one of these forays Sinthues had the sinews of his right hand severed by a spear-thrust, and was thus disabled from actual fighting ever after.

Basilica of St. Paul occupied.

On the southern side of Rome the Basilica of St. Paul, connected by its long colonnade with the Ostian Gate of the city (where stands the pyramid of Caius Cestius), and protected on one side by the stream of the Tiber, furnished a capital stronghold, but one which, from religious reasons, the Goths had hitherto refrained from including in their sphere of operations[2].

[1] Fourteen miles instead of sixty-two.

[2] 'To neither of the Apostles' temples during the whole period of the war was any unkind act done by the Goths, but all the

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537. The orthodox Belisarius was troubled with no such scruples. All the Huns in his army—the Huns were still heathen—were sent thither under the command of Valerian to form a camp between the Basilica and the river. Here they could both obtain forage for their own horses and grievously interfere with the foraging excursions of the Goths from their fortress at Torre Fiscale. In truth, hunger, as the result of all these operations of Belisarius, was now beginning to tell severely on the unwieldy Gothic host. And not Hunger only: the other great general, Pestilence, began to lay his hand heavily on the barbarians. He was present in all their camps, but in none more terribly than in the new one between the Aqueducts. At length that stronghold had to be abandoned, and the dwindled remnant of its defenders returned to the camps nearer Rome. The deadly malaria had communicated itself also to the Huns in their trenches by S. Paolo, and they too returned to Rome. Already we seem to perceive in the sixth century the phenomenon with which we are so familiar in the nineteenth, that the malaria is more fatal in the solitary Campagna than in the crowded city.

Pestilence in the Gothic camp, and among the Huns.

Return of Antonina to Rome.

So the autumn wore on, both armies suffering terrible privations, but each hoping to outlast the other. Probably about the month of October, Antonina returned to her fond and anxious husband. At least, on the 18th of November[1] we find her taking part in

accustomed sacred rites continued to be performed in them by the priests' (p. 160).

[1] The deposition of Silverius which is related here is placed by Procopius at an earlier date. He describes it in the 25th chapter of his First Book, and in the *following* chapter recounts the events of the 41st day of the siege (about 13th April, 537). But against

a strange transaction, the particulars of which are preserved for us with dramatic vividness by the old Papal biographer. To understand it we must turn back a page or two in the tedious history of the Monophysite controversy. It will be remembered that the venerable Pope Agapetus during his visit to Constantinople in 536 had convicted Anthimus, the Byzantine Patriarch, of Monophysite heresy, had brought about his deposition from his see, and had consecrated Mennas in his room. The Empress Theodora, who clung to her Monophysite creed as passionately as if it had been some new form of sensual gratification, set her heart on the reversal of this deposition; and seeing the influence exerted over her husband's mind by the successors of St. Peter, determined that Anthimus should be recalled by the mediation of the Roman Pontiff. To the restless and intriguing intellect of the Empress the torrents of noble blood which were being shed in desperate conflict round the walls of the Eternal City meant merely that she was a little nearer to or a little further from the accomplishment of her project for having her own Bishop reinstated in his see. With this view she sent letters to the new Pope, Silverius, urging him to pay a speedy visit to Constantinople, or, failing in that act of courtesy, at least to restore

Papal affairs.

Theodora desires the restoration of Anthimus.

this has to be set the very precise testimony of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, who puts the death of Agapetus on the 22nd April, 536, accession of Silverius 8th June in the same year, duration of his pontificate one year, five months, eleven days, thus bringing his deposition down to 18th November, 537 (see Clinton's Fasti Romani, pp. 767 and 769). Against these apparently precise dates of the Papal biographer I do not think that the mere recollections of Procopius, writing after an interval of thirteen years, ought to prevail.

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Anthimus to his old dignity. Silverius, when he read the letters, said, 'Now I know that this woman will compass my death;' but trusting in God and St. Peter he returned a positive refusal to recall the heretic who was justly condemned for his wickedness.

She decides to replace Silverius by Vigilius.

Finding Silverius inflexible, Theodora listened to the offer which had been already made by the archdeacon Vigilius, who was at this time acting as Apocrisiarius, or, in the language of later times, Nuncio of the Roman Bishop at the Imperial Court. This man, who, it may be remembered, was the expectant legatee of the Papal dignity, if Pope Boniface II. had obtained the power to will away that splendid heritage[1], now offered full compliance with all Theodora's demands in favour of the Monophysites, and in addition, it is said, a bribe of 200 pounds weight of gold (about £8000) if he were enthroned instead of Silverius in the chair of St. Peter. The Empress therefore addressed a letter 'to the Patrician Belisarius,' directing him to find some occasion against Silverius to depose him from the Pontificate, or, if that were impossible, to force him to repair to Constantinople. The noble Belisarius, who had little liking for the task, and had enough upon his hands in the defence of Rome without plunging into the controversy concerning the Two Natures, had perhaps lingered in the fulfilment of this odious commission. Now, if our reading of the course of events be correct, Antonina, anxious to win the favour of Theodora, having returned from her successful mission to Campania, urged her unwilling husband to execute the commands of their patroness.

A letter was produced, written in the name of

[1] See p. 78.

Silverius and addressed to King Witigis, offering to open the Asinarian Gate to the Goths. There was this much of plausibility in the alleged treason, that the Lateran Church is close to the Asinarian Gate, and possibly it might seem not inconsistent with the office of a Christian bishop to end the frightful sufferings of his flock even by such an act of disloyalty as this. The contemporaries, however, of Silverius seem to have entirely acquitted him of responsibility in this matter: and even the names of the forgers of the document are given by one historian. They were, Marcus a clerk, probably employed at the General's head-quarters, and a guardsman named Julian[1].

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537. Silverius accused of treasonable correspondence with the Goths.

Silverius is adjured by Belisarius to obey the Empress.

With this letter in his hand, Belisarius sent for Silverius and urged him to avert his own ruin by obeying the mandates of the terrible Augusta, renouncing the decrees of Chalcedon and entering into communion with the Monophysites. For a moment Silverius seems to have wavered. He left the palace, withdrew from the dangerous Lateran, shut himself up in the church of St. Sabina on the desolate Aventine, and there took counsel with his friends what he should do. Photius, the son of Antonina, was sent to lure him from his retreat by promises of safety. The Pope went once to the Pincian, notwithstanding the advice of his friends 'to put no confidence in the oaths of the Greeks[2].' He returned that time in safety though still unyielding; but going a second time with a heavy heart and fearing the malice of his enemies, he was,

[1] Liberatus calls them 'Marcum quemdam scholasticum et Julianum quemdam praetorianum.'

[2] 'Qui autem Silverio adstabant, persuadebant ei, ne Graecorum crederet juramentis' (Liberatus, xxii).

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537. Silverius at the Pincian Palace.

Liberatus tells us, 'seen by his friends no more.' The expressive silence of this historian corresponds with the fuller details given by the, perhaps later, Papal biographer: 'At the first and the second veils' (such were the semi-regal pomp and seclusion which the great General maintained) 'all the clergy were parted from him. Then Silverius, entering with Vigilius only into the Mausoleum[1], found Antonina the Patrician's wife lying on a couch, and Vilisarius [Belisarius] sitting at her feet. And when Antonina the Patrician's wife saw him, she said to him, "Tell us, Lord Pope Silverius, what have we done to thee and to the Romans that thou shouldest wish to betray us into the hands of the Goths?" While she was yet speaking the sub-deacon John, District-visitor[2] of the first Region, stripped the pallium from his shoulders and led him into a bed-room. There he stripped him, put on him the monastic dress, and concealed him. Then Sixtus the sub-deacon, District-visitor of the sixth Region, seeing him already turned into a monk, went forth and made this announcement to the clergy, "The Lord Pope has been deposed and made a monk." Then they, hearing this, all fled; and Vigilius the Archdeacon received Silverius as if into his protection, and sent him to banishment in Pontus,'—or rather, as Liberatus tells us, to Patara in Lycia. Assuredly the first-fruits of the restored Imperial dominion in Italy were bitter for the Roman Bishops who had so large a share in bringing about the change. That a Pope, the son of a Pope and

[1] I am unable to explain this name. [It is Musileo in Duchesne.]

[2] Regionarius. According to Ducange the Regionarii were ecclesiastical notaries who, each in his own Region of the city, represented the absent pontiff in the assembly of the clergy.

a great Roman noble, should have the pallium torn from him and be thrust forth into obscure exile at the bidding of a woman, and that woman the daughter of an actress and a circus-rider, was a degradation to which the Arian Theodoric and his successors had never subjected the representative of St. Peter [1].

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537-8.

Silverius in exile.

We will anticipate the course of the narrative by a few months in order to finish the story of Silverius. When he arrived at Patara his wrongs stirred the compassion of the Bishop of that city, who sought an audience with the Emperor and said, 'Of all the many kings who reign in the world not one has suffered such cruel reverses of fortune as this man, who, as Pope, is over the whole Church [2].' Justinian, who was perhaps ignorant of his wife's machinations, ordered that Silverius should be carried back to Rome and put on his trial. If the letters attributed to him were genuine, he should still have the choice of the episcopate of any other city but Rome; if forged, he should be restored to the Papal throne. Vigilius—so his enemies asserted—terrified by the return of his rival, sent a message to Belisarius, 'Hand over to me Silverius; else can I not pay the price which I promised for the popedom.' The unhappy ex-pontiff was transferred to the custody of two of the body-guard [3] of

[1] Procopius briefly mentions the deposition of Silverius, 'the high-priest of the city,' on a suspicion of treating with the Goths, and the substitution of Vigilius. He tells us that for the same reason Belisarius sent some of the Senators into temporary exile, among them Maximus, descendant of the rival of Valentinian III (De B. G. i. 25).

[2] An important assertion of Papal supremacy in the sixth century.

[3] 'Traditus est duobus Vigilii defensoribus et servis.'

BOOK V. CH. 9.

Vigilius, and by them taken to the desolate island of Palmaria, where, being fed on the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, he expired on the 21st of June, 538. Posterity reverenced him as a martyr, and many sick persons were cured at his tomb [1].

His death, 538.

Fresh troops for Rome, Dec. 537.

We return to the siege of Rome. The month of December was now reached. Fresh troops, whose numbers were considerable when compared with the little band of Belisarius, though not when compared with the still remaining multitudes of the besiegers, had been despatched from the East, and were collecting in the harbours of Southern Italy. There were at Naples 3000 Isaurians under Paulus and Conon, at Otranto 800 Thracian horsemen under John, and 1000 other cavalry under Alexander and Marcentius. There had already arrived in Rome by the Via Latina 300 horsemen under Zeno; and the 500 soldiers (perhaps infantry) collected by Procopius were still in Campania waiting to enter Rome.

John the Sanguinary, nephew of Vitalian.

Of the fresh generals who thus appear upon the scene, the only one of whom we need take special notice is John. He was the nephew of Vitalian, and from that relationship might have been supposed to

[1] Anastasius and Liberatus both substantially agree in attributing the death of Silverius to Vigilius. However strong may have been the prejudice against the latter Pope, I do not think we are justified in setting aside this double testimony against him on the strength of a passage in the Anecdota (p. 16, ed. Bonn), where Procopius says that Eugenius, one of the slaves of Antonina, 'wrought the deed of wickedness against Silverius' (ᾧ δὴ καὶ τὸ ἐς Σιλβέριον εἴργασται μίασμα). Alemannus says that the Editio Augustana reads *Liberius* instead of Silverius: but I do not understand this, as the Editio Princeps published at Augsburg (Editio Augustana) does not contain the Anecdota.

be not a safe servant for Justinian, by whom Vitalian had been murdered. But we can discern no evidence of his being regarded with suspicion on this account. He was a skilful general and a stout-hearted soldier, absolutely incapable of fear, and able to vie with any of the barbarians in the endurance of hardship and in contentment with the coarsest fare[1]. Either a cruel disposition, or, possibly, mere love for the gory revel of battle, had procured for him the epithet of *Sanguinarius*, under which he appears in the Papal Biography[2]. Next to Bessas and Constantine, he was probably the most important officer now in the Imperial service in Italy, and, as we shall see hereafter, his fame was viewed with some jealousy by Belisarius. Although there were other officers bearing the same popular name, to prevent the tedious repetition either of his gory epithet or of his relationship to Vitalian, he will in these pages be called simply John, the others being distinguished by their peculiar epithets.

The re-inforcements reach Ostia.

The large number of troops under Paulus and Conon were ordered to sail with all speed to Ostia. John, with his 1800 horsemen, to whom were joined the 500 soldiers raised by Procopius, marched along the Appian Way, escorting a long train of waggons laden with provisions for the famishing citizens of Rome. If the enemy should attack them their purpose was to form the waggons in a circle round them and fight behind this hastily raised barrier. No such attack, however, appears to have been made. The Goths at this time

[1] See his character in Procopius, De Bello Gotthico, ii. 10 (p. 185 ed. Bonn).

[2] In Vita Vigilii (p. 296 ed. Duchesne). This epithet is never given him by Procopius.

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were thinking of embassies and oratory rather than of cutting off the enemy's supplies. It was no small disappointment to John and his troops to find Tarracina destitute of Roman forces. They had reckoned on meeting there Martin and Trajan, whom Belisarius had a few days before withdrawn into the city. However, favoured perhaps in part by the fight which was at the same time going on round the walls of Rome, both divisions of the army, by sea and land, arrived safely at Ostia, with all the stores of corn and wine with which they had freighted their ships and piled their waggons. The Isaurians dug a deep ditch round their quarters in the harbour-city, and the troops of John placed themselves 'in laager' (to use the phrase with which South African warfare has made us familiar) behind their waggons.

Sortie of the Imperialists from Rome.

Meanwhile to divert the attention of the barbarians from the movements of the relieving armies Belisarius had planned a fresh sortie[1]. The story of these sallies is becoming monotonous, from their almost uniform success, but we are nearing the end of the catalogue. The main attack was to be made this time from the Porta Flaminia, a gate which had been so fast closed up by Belisarius that the Goths had practically come to regard it not only as unassailable, but also as containing for them no menace of a sally. Now, however, the General removed by night the large masses of stone (taken very likely from the agger of Servius Tullius) with which he had filled it up and drew up the great body of his troops behind it. A feigned

[1] Some little vivid touches of detail introduced into the narrative of this sortie would seem to show that by this time Procopius was again in Rome.

attack made by 1000 horsemen under Trajan and Diogenes, issuing from the Pincian Gate, distracted the attention of the Goths, and caused them to pour out from the neighbouring camps in chase of the flying Romans. When they were in all the confusion of pursuit, Belisarius ordered the Flaminian Gate to be opened and launched his well-drilled troops against the unsuspecting foe. The Romans charged across the intervening space, and were soon close up to the ramparts of that which we have called the First Gothic Camp, nearest of all the camps to the walls of Rome. A steep and narrow pathway which led to the main gate of the camp was held for a time, in Thermopylae fashion, by a courageous and well-armed barbarian, but Mundilas, the brave guardsman, at length slew the Gothic Leonidas and suffered no one to fill his place. The Roman soldiers pressed on, and swarmed round the ramparts of the camp, but, few as were the defenders within it, they were kept for some time at bay by the strength of the works. 'For the fosse,' says our historian, 'was dug to a great depth, and the earth taken out from it, being all thrown to the inside, had made a very high bank which served the purpose of a wall, and was strongly armed with very sharp stakes and many of them [1].' Then one of the household guard of Belisarius, an active soldier named Aquilinus, catching hold of a horse's bridle leaped upon its back, and was carried by its spring right over the rampart into the camp [2]. Here he slew many of the Goths, but gathering round him they

First Gothic Camp attacked.

[1] Again the Pfahlgraben style of fortification.

[2] Λώρου λαβόμενος ἵππου ἐνθένδε ξὺν τῷ ἵππῳ ἐς μέσον τὸ χαράκωμα ἥλατο.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 537. hurled upon him a shower of missiles. The horse was killed, but the brave and nimble Aquilinus escaped unhurt, and leaping down from the wall, joined on foot the stream of Roman soldiers who were pouring southwards from the Gothic camp[1] towards the Pincian Gate, where the barbarians were still pursuing the flying troops of Trajan. A shower of arrows in their rear slew many of the Goths: the survivors looked round and halted: the lately flying Romans also turned: the Goths found themselves caught between two attacks[2]; they lost all cohesion and fell by hundreds. A few with difficulty escaped to the nearest camps, the occupants of which kept close and dared not stir forth to help them.

Flight of the Goths.

Trajan wounded.

In this battle, successful as were its main results for the Romans, Trajan received a wound which was well-nigh fatal. An arrow struck his face, a little above his right eye, in the angle formed by the eye and the nose. The whole of the iron tip, though long and large, entered and was hidden in the wound: the wooden part of the arrow, not well joined to the iron, fell to the earth. Notwithstanding his wound Trajan went on pursuing and slaying, and no ill results came of it. 'Five years after,' says the historian, 'the arrow-tip of its own accord worked its way to the surface and showed itself in his face. For three years it has protruded a little from the surface. Every one expects that in course of time it will work out

[1] Was the Gothic camp actually taken by the Romans? I think not: certainly not held by them; but the language of Procopius is not very clear on this point.

[2] I must not say 'between two fires,' though that expression has become so natural to us that it is difficult to dispense with it.

altogether. Meanwhile Trajan has suffered no inconvenience from it of any kind[1].' BOOK V. CH. 9.

537. The Goths, dispirited, send an embassy to Belisarius.

The result of this sally was to strike deep discouragement into the hearts of the barbarians. 'Already,' said they to one another, 'we are as much the besieged as the besiegers. Famine and Pestilence are stalking through all our camps. New armies, we cannot tell how large, are on their way from Constantinople, and the terrible Belisarius, who knows that only a few of us are left to represent the many myriads who sat down before Rome, is actually daring to assault us in our camps, one of which he has all but taken.' In some kind of assembly, which the historian calls their Senate, they debated the question of raising the siege, and decided on the desperate expedient of an appeal to the justice and generosity of Byzantium, while sending an embassy to Rome to plead their cause with Belisarius. The embassy consisted of an official of high rank in the Gothic state but of Roman lineage (one who occupied in fact nearly the same position formerly held by Cassiodorus, but whose name Procopius has not recorded)[2], and with him two Gothic

[1] At first sight it would seem that this passage must have been written eight years after the wound was received, i. e. in 545–6: and possibly this may have been the case, though the De Bello Gotthico as a whole was published (according to Dahn) in 550. But if we examine the passage minutely we shall see that there may be an interval of a few years between πέμπτῳ ὕστερον ἐνιαυτῷ and τρίτον τοῦτο ἔτος ('The point first showed itself after five years, and now for three years has been absolutely projecting from his face').

[2] It is not improbable (as suggested by a writer in the Athenaeum, Sept. 11, 1886) that this person whom Procopius calls Ῥωμαῖον ἄνδρα ἐν Γότθοις δόκιμον may have been Cassiodorus himself. 'The oration which is ascribed by Procopius (De B. G.

BOOK V. CH. 9. nobles. The arguments used by the Gothic Envoys and the replies of Belisarius, which are probably in

537. the main correctly reported by the historian, himself present at the interview, may best be presented in the form of a dialogue.

Gothic Envoys. 'This war is inflicting upon both the combatants indescribable miseries. Let us each moderate our desires, and see if some means cannot be found of bringing it to an end. The ruler should think not merely of the gratification of his own ambition, but also of the happiness of his subjects, and *that* assuredly is not being promoted on either side by the continuance of the war. We suggest that the conference be not conducted by means of studied orations on either side, but that each party say out that which is in their minds without preparation, and that if anything be said which seems improper, exception be taken to it at once.'

Belisarius. 'I shall interpose no hindrance to the dialogue proceeding as ye propose: but see that ye utter words that are just and that tend towards peace.'

Gothic Envoys. 'We complain of you, O Romans, that you have taken up arms without cause against an allied and friendly people: and we shall prove our complaint by facts which no man can gainsay. The Goths came into possession of this land not by violently wresting it from the Romans, but by taking it from

Gothic account of Theodoric's conquest of Italy.

II. 6) to this unnamed Roman, and which provoked the sneer of Belisarius at its verbosity, is surely very much the kind of discourse that Cassiodorus would have delivered, and at that period there can hardly have been two Roman rhetoricians holding high positions in the Gothic service.'

Odovacar, who, having overturned the Emperor of that day, changed the constitutional government which existed here into a tyranny[1]. Now Zeno who was then Emperor of the East was desirous to avenge his colleague on the usurper and to free the country, but was not strong enough to cope with the forces of Odovacar. He therefore persuaded our ruler Theodoric, who was at that very time meditating the siege of Byzantium, to forego his hostility to the Empire in remembrance of the dignities which he had already received in the Roman State, (those namely of Patrician and Consul), to avenge upon Odovacar his injustice to Augustulus, and to confer upon this country and his own people the blessings of a just and stable government. Thus then did our nation come to be guardians of this land of Italy. The settled order of things which we found here we preserved, nor can any man point to any new law, written or unwritten, and say "That was introduced by Theodoric[2]." As for religious affairs, so anxiously have we guarded the liberty of the Romans that there is no instance of one of them having voluntarily or under compulsion adopted our creed, while there are many instances of Goths who have gone over to yours, not one of whom has suffered any punishment. The holy places of the Romans have received the highest honour from us, and their right of sanctuary has been uniformly respected. The high offices of the State have been always held by Romans,

[1] The term 'constitutional government' is of course an anachronism, but perhaps conveys best to a modern reader the meaning of *politeia*: ἐς τυραννίδα τὴν τῇδε πολιτείαν μεταβαλὼν εἶχε.

[2] In the face of the Edictum Theodorici it is difficult to believe that the Gothic envoys are here reported correctly.

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not once by a Goth. We challenge contradiction if any of our statements are incorrect. Then, too, the Romans have been permitted by the Goths to receive a Consul every year, on the nomination of the Emperor of the East.

'To sum up. You did nothing to help Italy when, not for a few months but for ten long years, she was groaning under the oppression of Odovacar and his barbarians: but now you are putting forth all your strength upon no valid pretext against her rightful occupants. We call upon you therefore to depart hence, to enjoy in quiet your own possessions and the plunder which during this war you have collected in our country.'

Belisarius (in wrath). 'You promised that you would speak briefly and with moderation, but you have given us a long harangue, full of something very like bragging. The Emperor Zeno sent Theodoric to make war upon Odovacar, not in order that he himself should obtain the kingship of Italy (for what would have been the advantage of replacing one tyrant by another?), but that the country might be restored to freedom and its obedience to the Emperor. Now all that Theodoric did against the usurper was well done, but his later behaviour, in refusing to restore the country to its rightful lord, was outrageously ungrateful: nor can I see any difference between the conduct of a man who originally lays hands on another's property, and his who, when such a stolen treasure comes into his possession, refuses to restore it to its true owner. Never, therefore, will I surrender the Emperor's land to any other lord. But if you have any other request to make, speak on.'

Byzantine account of the same transaction.

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537. Goths offer to surrender Sicily.

Gothic Envoys. 'How true is all that we have advanced every member of this company knows right well. But, as a proof of our moderation, we will relinquish to you the large and wealthy island of Sicily, without which your possession of Africa is insecure.'

Belisarius offers to surrender Britain.

Belisarius (with sarcastic courtesy). 'Such generosity calls for a return in kind. We will freely grant permission to the Goths to occupy the whole of Britain, a much larger island than you offer to us, and one which once belonged to the Romans as Sicily *once* belonged to the Goths.'

Gothic Envoys. 'Well then, if we talk about adding Naples and Campánia to our offer, will you consider it?'

Belisarius. 'Certainly not. We have no power to grant away the lands of the Emperor in a manner which he might not approve of.'

Gothic Envoys. 'Or if we pledged ourselves to pay a certain yearly tribute to your master?'

Belisarius. 'No, not so. We can treat on no conditions but those which secure that the Emperor shall have his own again.'

A truce proposed and accepted.

Gothic Envoys. 'Come then: allow us to send ambassadors to the Emperor to treat about all the matters in dispute, and let there be a cessation of hostilities on both sides for a fixed period, to give the ambassadors time to go and return.'

Belisarius. 'Be it so. Never shall my voice be raised against any proposition which is really made in the interests of peace.' And thereupon the ambassadors returned to the Gothic camp to make arrangements for the coming truce.

Thus ended this memorable interview between the

BOOK V. Ch. 9. 537. representative of Caesar and the servants of the Gothic King. Memorable, if for no others, assuredly for us, the dwellers in that well-nigh forgotten island whose sovereignty Belisarius tossed contemptuously to the Goths as a reply to their proposed surrender of Sicily. Would that we had a Procopius to tell us what was passing at that moment in 'the island much larger than Sicily, which had belonged aforetime to the
534. Romans!' Three years before, as we are told, Cerdic, the half-mythical ancestor of King Alfred and of Queen Victoria, had died (if indeed he had ever lived), perchance in some palace rudely put together on the ruins of the Roman Praetorium at Winchester. His people had been for near twenty years pausing in their career of conquest, during that mysterious interval, or even refluence of the Saxon wave, which legend has glorified by connecting it with the great deeds of
547. Arthur. In the far north, ten years after this time, King Ida was to rear upon the basaltic rock of Bamburgh, overlooking the misty flock of the Farne Islands, that fortress-city which was to be the capital of the Bernician kingdom, and which narrowly missed being the capital of England itself and rivalling the world-wide fame of London. When we have said this we have told nearly all that is known of the deeds of our fathers and the fortunes of our land during this central portion of the sixth century after Christ.

Belisarius under cover of the truce re-victuals Rome.

The negotiations for a truce, and the consequent slackening of the vigilance of the Goths, came at the most opportune moment possible for the plans of Belisarius. Vast quantities of corn, wine, and other provisions for the relief of the hunger-stricken City were collected at Ostia, but a murderous struggle

would have been necessary to cover their entrance into Rome. On the very evening of the day of conference Belisarius, accompanied apparently by his wife and attended by 100 horsemen, rode to Ostia to meet the generals who were in command of the Isaurians at that port. He encouraged them by the tidings of the negotiations that had been commenced, urged them to use all possible diligence in the transport of the provisions to Rome, and promised to do all in his power to secure them a safe passage. With the first grey of the morning he returned to the City, leaving Antonina behind to consult with the generals as to the best means of conveying the stores. The only practicable towpath—as was before said—ran along the right bank of the river, and was commanded by the Gothic garrison of Portus. Moreover, the draught-oxen were half dead with hunger and hardship. In these circumstances Antonina and the generals decided to trust to sails and oars alone. They selected all the largest boats belonging to the navy at Ostia, fitted each one with rude battlements of tall planks to protect the rowers from the arrows of the enemy, freighted them with the cargoes of provisions, and began their perilous voyage. A considerable part of the army accompanied them along the left bank of the river by way of escort, but several of the Isaurians were also left at Ostia to guard the ships. Apparently the wind blew from the south-west, for wherever the stream pursued a straight course their sails were full and all went pleasantly; but in the windings of the river they had to resort to their oars, and hard was the toil needed to traverse these portions of the stream.

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537. The Goths offer no opposition.

Strangely enough, the Goths, though no truce was formally concluded, offered no opposition to this proceeding, though they must have known that that day's work, if successful, would undo, in great measure, the results of the last six months of blockade. The garrison at Portus lay quiet, marvelling at the ingenuity of the Romans, and saw the heavy barges sail almost under the towers of their fortress. The Goths in the six camps lay quiet too, partly comforting themselves with the assurance that the Romans would never get their city re-victualled in that way, partly thinking that it was not worth while to imperil the results of the conference and lose the longed-for truce by any hostile action which might offend the terrible Belisarius. So they let their opportunity slip. The barges passed and repassed till all the stores were safely transported to Rome. The ships then returned to Constantinople with all speed to avoid the peril of storms, the winter solstice being now reached. A few Isaurians, under the command of Paulus, were left at Ostia, but the great mass of the new soldiers entered Rome in safety.

21 Dec. 537.

Truce for three months concluded and hostages exchanged.

When the Goths had quietly looked on at all these important operations, they might just as well have at once recognised the hopelessness of their task and marched away from Rome. They still clung however, or rather perhaps their King alone still clung, to the expedient of a truce and an embassy, and to the hope of obtaining favourable terms from the justice of Justinian. It was arranged that Gothic ambassadors should be sent under Roman escort to Constantinople, that a truce for three months should be concluded between the two armies to give the embassy time to go and return, and that hostages of high rank should

be given, on both sides. The Gothic hostage was a nobleman named Ulias; the Roman hostage was Zeno, a cavalry officer who, as was before stated, had recently entered Rome by the Latin Way.

Gothic positions evacuated and occupied by Belisarius.

In the whole course of these negotiations the Goths had been thoroughly outwitted by Belisarius. Nothing had been said about the question of revictualling Rome; and Belisarius had quietly decided that question in his own favour, under the very eyes of the puzzled barbarians. Neither does anything seem to have been said expressly as to the case of either army ceasing to occupy all its positions in force, a case which soon arose. Shut off from the coast by the Byzantines' command of the sea, and having, very likely, failed to maintain the Roman roads in good condition, the Goths found great difficulty in provisioning the garrisons at some of their distant posts. Under the stress of this difficulty they withdrew their garrisons from Portus, from Centumcellae (the modern Civita Vecchia), and from Albanum. As fast as each square was thus left vacant on the chess-board, Belisarius moved up a piece to take possession of it. The Goths, who found themselves thus ever more and more hemmed in by the Roman outposts, sent an embassy of angry complaint to Belisarius. 'Was this in accordance with the terms of the armistice? Witigis had sent for the Goths in Portus to come to him for a temporary service, and Paulus and his Isaurians had marched in and taken possession of the undefended fortress. So, too, with Albanum and Centumcellae. All these places must be given back to them or they would do terrible things.' Belisarius simply laughed at their threats, and told them that all the world knew perfectly well for what

The Goths remonstrate.

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538.

reason those fortresses had been abandoned. The truce still formally continued, but both parties eyed one another with jealousy and distrust.

Troops sent into the Abruzzi under John.

By the new reinforcements which had been poured into Rome, Belisarius found himself at the head of so large a number of troops that he could even spare some for distant operations. He therefore despatched John at the head of 800 horsemen to the mountains of the Abruzzi. Two other bodies of troops, amounting to 1200 in all, were to follow his motions and adapt their movements to his, but, perhaps for reasons of commissariat, not to occupy the same quarters. One of these supporting armies was commanded by Damian, nephew of Valerian, and his troops were drawn from that general's army. The orders given to John were to pass the winter at Alba [Fucentia], a city about seventy miles from Rome, in the heart of the Apennines and near to the little lake of Fucinus. Here he was to rest, not disturbing the Goths so long as they attempted no hostile operation. The moment that he perceived the truce to be broken, he was to sweep like a whirlwind on the territory of Picenum, between the Apennines and the Hadriatic, to ravage the Gothic possessions (scrupulously respecting those of the Romans), to collect plunder from every quarter, and to carry off their women and children into slavery. All this could be easily effected, since the men of the district were all serving in the Gothic armies. He was to take every fortress that threatened his route, leaving none to molest his rear, and he was to keep his plunder intact till the time came for dividing it among the *whole* army. 'For it is not fair,' said Belisarius, with a laugh, 'that we should have the

trouble of killing the drones and that you should divide all the honey.' BOOK V. CH. 9.

538. Visit of Datius, Archbishop of Milan.

Two events relieved the tedium of the siege during the early months of the year 538: the visit of the Archbishop of Milan and the quarrel between Belisarius and Constantine. Datius, the Ligurian Archbishop, came at the head of a deputation of influential citizens to entreat Belisarius to send a small garrison to enable them to hold their city (which had apparently already revolted from the Gothic King) for the Empire. They enlarged on the populousness and wealth of Mediolanum, the second city of Italy, its important position (eight days' journey from Ravenna and the same distance from the frontiers of Gaul), and the certainty that Liguria would follow whithersoever its capital might lead. Belisarius promised to grant their request as soon as possible, and meanwhile persuaded Datius and his companions to pass the winter with him in Rome.

Quarrel between Belisarius and Constantine.

The quarrel with Constantine, in which Procopius sees the hand of Nemesis resenting the uniform prosperity of the Imperial cause, arose out of small beginnings. A certain Presidius, one of the leading citizens of Ravenna, having some cause of complaint against the Goths, determined to flee to the Imperial army. Leaving Ravenna on pretence of hunting, he passed through the Gothic lines (this happened just before Witigis started for the siege of Rome) and made his way to the army which under Constantine was then quartered at Spoleto. Of all his possessions he was able to bring with him nothing but two daggers in golden scabbards set with precious stones. The fame of the refugee from Ravenna and his jewelled

Affair of Presidius and his daggers.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 538.

poniards reached the ears of Constantine, who sent one of his guards named Maxentiolus to the church outside the walls, where Presidius had taken refuge, to demand the daggers in the General's name. Presidius was forced to submit to this spoliation, but hastened to Rome to lay his complaint before the General. In the turmoil of the Gothic assault and the Roman sorties, he found for long no suitable opportunity for stating his case; but now that the truce had been proclaimed he sought and obtained an audience with the General, before whom he laid his complaint. Belisarius had other reasons for censuring his lieutenant; but at present he confined himself to a gentle remonstrance with Constantine, and the expression of a wish that he would abstain from such acts of rapacity. The Fate which was brooding over the covetous general prevented him from 'leaving well alone.' He must needs taunt Presidius, whenever he met him, with the loss of his daggers, and ask him what he had gained by complaining to Belisarius. At length the refugee could bear it no longer; but one day when Belisarius was riding through the Forum he seized his horse's bridle and cried out with a loud voice, 'Are these the far-famed laws of Justinian, that when a man takes refuge with you from the barbarians ye should spoil him of his goods by force?' The General's retinue shouted to him to let go the horse's bridle, but he clung to it, repeating his cries and passionate appeals for justice, till Belisarius, who knew the rightness of his cause, promised that the daggers should be restored to him.

Assembly of generals.

The next day there was an assembly of the generals in a chamber of the palace on the Pincian. Constantine

was there, and Bessas and Valerian. There was also present Ildiger, son-in-law of Antonina, who had lately come to Rome with a large troop of horsemen from Africa. Before all this assembly Belisarius related what had occurred on the previous day, blamed the unjust deed of Constantine, and exhorted him to make a tardy reparation for his fault by restoring the daggers to their owner. 'No,' replied Constantine, 'I will do nothing of the kind. I would rather throw the daggers into the Tiber than give them back to Presidius.' Belisarius asked him with some warmth if he remembered who was his general. 'In everything else,' said Constantine, 'I am willing to obey you, since the Emperor orders me to do so, but as for the matter that you are now talking about I will never obey you.' Belisarius ordered the guards to enter. 'To kill me, I suppose,' said Constantine. 'No,' was the answer, 'but since your armour-bearer Maxentiolus by force took these daggers away, by force to compel him to restore them.' Constantine, however, believing that his death was decided upon, determined to do some memorable deed while he yet lived, and drawing the dagger which hung at his side stabbed Belisarius in the belly. Wounded, but not fatally, the General staggered back, and clasping Bessas in his arms interposed the portly form of the Ostrogoth between himself and the assassin. He then glided out of the chamber. Constantine, mad with rage, was on the point of following him, but Ildiger seized him by the right hand and Bessas by the left, and they together pulled him in an opposite direction. Then the guards entered, and with much difficulty wrested the dagger from the furious officer.

Constantine stabs Belisarius.

BOOK V. CH. 9.

538.

Constantine put to death.

He was dragged off to a place of confinement in the palace, thence, after some days, to another house, and eventually was put to death by the order of Belisarius.

Other reasons assigned for the execution of Constantine.

The execution of a lieutenant who had so grossly insulted his superior officer and attempted his life does not appear to be a deed difficult to justify. Procopius remarks, however, that 'this was the only unholy action which Belisarius ever committed, and it was unlike his usual disposition. For he generally showed great gentleness in his dealings with all men. But, as before remarked, it was fated that Constantine should come to a bad end.' This reflection convinces us that we have not heard the whole story, and that the affair of the jewelled poniards was rather the pretext than the cause of the death of Constantine. In the Anecdota, that Scandalous Chronicle written in the old age of Procopius, he informs us that when all Constantinople was talking about the gallantries of Antonina and the punishment inflicted on her lover by Belisarius, Constantine, in his condolence with the injured husband, said, 'It is not the young man but the lady that I should punish in such a case.' Antonina heard of the saying and treasured up her wrath till an occasion was found for wreaking it upon the injudicious officer.

Attempt of the Goths to enter by the Aqua Virgo.

Not long after this affair, the Goths attempted to enter the City by guile. Agricola's aqueduct, the Aqua Virgo, is so constructed, for engineering reasons, as to form a long circuit round the east and north of the City. The course which it now pursues is almost entirely in the rear of the Gothic position, but there seems reason to think that in 538 it passed through the Gothic lines, that it touched the Wall of Aurelian

near the Salarian Gate, and was then carried for some distance round the Wall on a low arcade only some three or four feet in height[1]. However this may be, there is no doubt that then as now it burrowed under the Pincian Hill, and emerged into a deep well-like chamber communicating with one of the palaces on that eminence. That palace was then the Pincian Palace inhabited by Belisarius. The dwelling which now rises immediately above the receptacle of the Aqua Virgo is the Villa Medicis, the home of the French Academy. A strong argument is thus furnished in favour of identifying the two sites. From the Pincian the water was carried, then as now, to the Campus Martius, the fountain of Trevi, and the neighbourhood of the Pantheon; in fact the aqueduct ran right into the very heart of Rome.

The Goths in the aqueduct.

A party of Goths, during this treacherous truce-time, determined to attempt an entrance into the City by this aqueduct, which of course, like all the others, was now only a tunnel bare of water. With lighted torches they groped their way through the *specus*, which is about six feet high by a foot and a half wide. They crept along unopposed, perhaps for a distance of one or two miles, till at last they were actually within the City, and close to the foot of the steps leading to the very palace of Belisarius. Here they found their further progress barred by a newly-erected wall. This wall had been built by command of Belisarius soon

[1] Depicted in one of Mr. Parker's photographs (No. 5). I follow his statement (Aqueducts, p. 47. n. 1, and pp. 121, 122) as to the alteration in the line of the Aqua Virgo, because some such deviation seems necessary to explain the narrative of Procopius, the present course of this part of the aqueduct being, I think, entirely subterranean.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 538.

after his entry into the City. The wary General, who knew every move that his enemy ought to make upon the board, was not going to allow Rome to be taken from him as he had taken Naples from the Goths, by stealing through an aqueduct. Foiled in their present purpose, the Goths broke off a bit of stone from this wall as a record of their perilous expedition, and returned to tell Witigis how near they had been to success and why they had missed it.

The light of their torches seen by a sentinel.

But while the explorers were moving along through the small part of the Aqua Virgo which was above ground, the flash of their torches through a chink in the walls attracted the attention of a sentinel, stationed perhaps in the fosse somewhere near the Pincian Gate. He talked to his comrades about this mysterious light, seen only a foot or two above the surface of the earth; but they only laughed at him, telling him that he must have seen a wolf's eyes gleaming through the darkness. However, the story of the sentinel and his wonderful light reached the ears of Belisarius. In a moment its true meaning flashed upon him. 'This is no wolf,' he said to himself; 'the Goths are trying the aqueduct.' At once he sent the guardsman Diogenes with a body of picked men to examine the channel. We must suppose that they took down part of the obstructing wall, and so entered the *specus*. They saw the place where the stone had been chipped off which was shown to Witigis. They pressed on: they found everywhere the droppings from the Gothic flambeaux, and at length discovered some Gothic lamps. It was clear that the enemy had been trying by these means to steal into Rome. The Goths soon perceived that

Belisarius was acquainted with their adventure, and the design, which Witigis had discussed in a council of war, of following up the quest opened by the exploring party, was promptly abandoned [1]. BOOK V. CH. 9. 538.

During the remainder of the three months of nominal truce two more attempts upon the City were made, or at any rate planned, by the barbarians. One was upon the Pincian Gate, and was arranged for the hour of the mid-day meal, when but few soldiers were likely to be behind the battlements. The Goths were coming on in loose order, with ladders to mount the walls and fire to burn the gate. But not even in truce-time were the walls ever left quite bare of guards. Fortunately, it was then the turn of the gallant Ildiger to keep watch. He saw the loosely marshalled band advancing, at once divined their traitorous design, sallied out with his followers, easily changed their disorderly advance into an equally disorderly retreat, and slew the greater number of them. A great clamour was raised in Rome; the Goths saw that their design was discovered, and all returned to their camps.

Scheme for drugging the guards on the river-wall.

The next scheme was of a baser kind, and was worthy of the confused brain from which it sprung. It has been said that the wall of the City between

[1] For some useful hints about this aqueduct-scheme I am indebted to Mr. Bryce, whose example I followed in exploring the entrance into the Aqua Virgo in the Borghese Gardens and the two flights of steps leading down to it from the summit of the Pincian Hill. It seems to me possible that the steep spiral staircase outside the Villa Medicis, the entrance to which is by a door called 'Porta del Cocchigliare dell' Acqua Vergine,' may be the same *cochlea* by which the troops of Belisarius descended and by which the Goths hoped to ascend into the City.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 538. the Tomb of Hadrian and the Flaminian Gate was low and destitute of towers, the military engineers of Aurelian having thought that the river would here be a sufficient protection. Witigis therefore argued thus with himself: 'If I could only lull to sleep the vigilance of the Roman sentinels on that piece of wall, a strong detachment of my army might cross the river in boats, climb the wall, and open the gates of the City to the rest of the army, who shall be all waiting outside.' He therefore took into his pay two Romans, probably of the labouring class, who dwelt near the great basilica of St. Peter. They promised to take a large skin of wine to these sentinels about nightfall, offer them refreshment, keep them drinking and talking till far into the night, and when they were too drunk to observe anything, throw an opiate, with which Witigis provided the traitors, into their cups. The infamous scheme was revealed to Belisarius by one of its intended instruments[1], who revealed also the name of his accomplice. The latter under torture confessed the criminal intention, and surrendered the opiate which he had received from Witigis. Belisarius cut off the nose and ears of the unhappy traitor,—these barbarous mutilations were becoming part of the penal code of Constantinople,—and sent him mounted on an ass to the Gothic camp to tell his dismal tale to his royal confederate. 'When the barbarians saw him they recognised that God did not bring their plans to a successful issue, and therefore that they would never be able to capture the City.'

By these two attempts (if we may trust the state-

[1] 'For it was not destined,' says Procopius, 'that Rome should be taken by this army.'

ment of Procopius, who probably throws more blame on the Goths than they deserve) the three months' truce was sufficiently broken to justify Belisarius in commencing a campaign of retaliation. He sent letters to John ordering him to begin the operations in Picenum which had been arranged between them. John marched with his two thousand horsemen through the settlements of the Goths, burning, plundering, wasting all that belonged to the enemy. Ulitheus, the aged uncle of Witigis, dared to meet him in battle, but was slain, and almost his whole army fell with him. After this, none would face him in the field. Pressing on through the country on the eastern slopes of the Apennines, he came to the fortresses of Urbino and Osimo, neither of them garrisoned by a large force of Goths, but both strong by their natural position. According to the orders of Belisarius he should have reduced each of these fortresses before proceeding further, but the cry of his army and his own military instinct both directed a bold forward movement to Rimini. To that city by the Hadriatic he accordingly marched, and such was the terror of the Goths that he carried it at the first assault. It is true that he had not here, as in the cases of Urbino and Osimo, to attack a high hill fortress, for Rimini, though surrounded with walls, lies in a wide plain at the mouth of the Marecchia; and the supremacy by sea which the Byzantines possessed would have made it a difficult city for the Goths to hold against a united attack by sea and land.

John commences retaliatory measures in Picenum.

Death of Ulitheus.

Ariminum taken.

But whatever the cause, here was the victorious army of John in possession of an important city two hundred miles in the rear of the Gothic army, and

BOOK V. CH. 9. only thirty-three, a single day's march, from their capital, Ravenna. John had rightly calculated that

538. Effect of these tidings on the besiegers of Rome. this step of his would lead to the raising of the siege of Rome. The Goths, thoroughly alarmed for the safety of their capital, began to chafe at every day spent in sight of those walls which, as they felt, they never should surmount. Their King too had his own reasons for sharing their impatience when it began to

Treachery of Matasuentha. be whispered that his young wife Matasuentha, proud and petulant, and never forgiving her lowly-born husband for the compulsion which had brought her to his side in wedlock, had sent secret messages to John at Rimini congratulating him on his success, and holding out to him hopes that she would betray the Gothic cause if he would accept her hand in marriage.

The siege raised, about March 12, 538. So it came to pass that when the three months of truce had expired, although no tidings had been received from the ambassadors, the Goths resolved to abandon their blockade of Rome. It was near the time of the Vernal Equinox, and 374 days from the commencement of the siege, when they carried this resolution into effect. At dawn of day, having set all their seven camps on fire, the dispirited mass of men began to move northward along the Flaminian Way.

The Goths depart. The Romans, who saw them departing, were for some time in doubt whether to pursue them or rather 'to make a bridge of gold for a retreating foe.' The absence of so many of their cavalry in Picenum was

They are attacked by Belisarius while crossing the Milvian Bridge. a reason for leaving them unmolested. But Belisarius hastily armed as large a force as he could muster, both of horse and foot, and when half the Gothic army had crossed the Milvian Bridge he launched his soldiers

forth from the Flaminian Gate, and made a furious attack on the Gothic rear. Mundilas, the escort of Procopius, conspicuous in so many previous battles, wrought great deeds of valour in this, fighting four barbarians at once and killing them all. Longinus[1], an Isaurian, was also among the foremost in the fight, which, having been for some time doubtful, ended in the flight of the barbarians. Then followed a terrible scene, Goth struggling with Goth for a place upon the bridge and for a way of escape from the devouring sword. Many fell by the hands of their own comrades, many were pushed off the bridge, and, encumbered by the weight of their armour, sank in the stream of the Tiber. Few, according to the account of Procopius, succeeded in struggling across to the opposite shore, where the other half of the army stood awaiting them. In this statement there is probably some exaggeration, but there can be no doubt that the well-timed attack of Belisarius inflicted a severe blow upon the retreating enemy. The joy of the Romans in their victory was alloyed by grief for the death of the valiant Longinus.

So ended the long siege of Rome by Witigis, a siege in which the numbers and prowess of the Goths were rendered useless by the utter incapacity of their commander. Ignorant how to assault, ignorant how to blockade, he allowed even the sword of Hunger to be wrested from him and used against his army by Belisarius. He suffered the flower of the Gothic nation to perish, not so much by the weapons of the Romans as by the deadly dews of the Campagna. With heavy hearts the barbarians must have thought, as they

[1] Named probably after Longinus the brother of Zeno.

BOOK V. CH. 9. 538. turned them northwards, upon the many graves of gallant men which they were leaving on that fatal plain. Some of them must have suspected the melancholy truth that they had dug one grave, deeper and wider than all, the grave of the Gothic monarchy in Italy.

CHAPTER X.

THE RELIEF OF RIMINI.

Authority.

Source :-

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, ii. 11–18 (pp. 191–217).

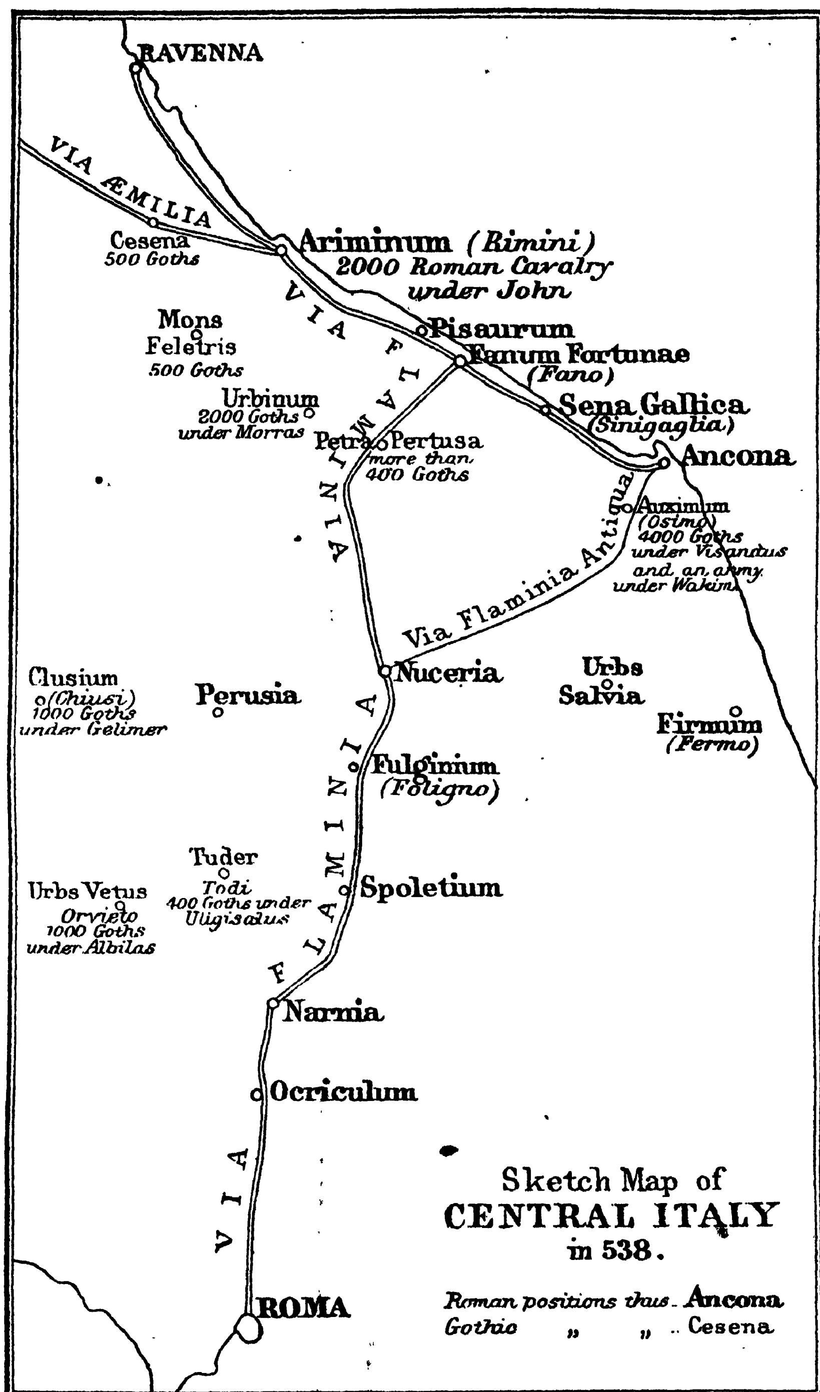
538.

THE utter failure of the Gothic enterprise against Rome did not, as might have been expected, immediately bring about the fall of Ravenna. Unskilful as was the strategy of the Ostrogoths, there was yet far more power of resistance shown by them than by the Vandals. In three months the invasion of Africa had been brought to a triumphant conclusion. The war in Italy had now lasted for three years, two more were still to elapse before the fall of the Gothic capital announced even its apparent conclusion.

Desultory warfare of the next two years.

These two years were passed in somewhat desultory fighting, waged partly in the neighbourhood of Milan and partly along the course of the great Flaminian Way. Leaving the valley of the Po for the present out of our calculations, we will confine our attention to the long struggle which wasted the Umbrian lands, traversed by the great north road of Italy which bore the name of Proconsul Flaminius. It had been always an important highway. By it the legions of Caesar had marched forth to conquer Gaul, and had returned

The Via Flaminia.



RAVENNA
VIA ÆMILIA
Cesena
500 Goths
Ariminum (Rimini)
2000 Roman Cavalry
under John
VIA FLAMINIA
Mons
Feletris
500 Goths
Pisaurum
Fanum Fortunae
(Fano)
Urbinum
2000 Goths
under Morras
Petra Pertusa
more than
400 Goths
Sena Gallica
(Sinigaglia)
Ancona
Auximum
(Osimo)
4000 Goths
under Visandus
and an army
under Wakim
Via Flaminia Antiqua
Nuceria
Urbs
Salvia
Firmum
(Fermo)
Clusium
(Chiusi)
1000 Goths
under Gelimer
Perusia
Fulginium
(Foligno)
Tuder
Todi
400 Goths under
Uligisalus
Urbs Vetus
Orvieto
1000 Goths
under Albilas
Spoletium
Narnia
Ocriculum
VIA
ROMA
Sketch Map of
CENTRAL ITALY
in 538.
Roman positions thus - Ancona
Gothic " " .. Cesena

to conquer the Republic. The course of events in the fifth and sixth centuries which made Rome and Ravenna both, in a certain sense, capitals of Italy, gave to the two hundred and thirty miles of road between those capitals an importance, political and military, such as it had never possessed before. BOOK V. CH. 10. 538.

General arrangement of the forces of the combatants.

Notwithstanding some slight curves, we may think of this road as running due north and south, since Ravenna is in almost precisely the same longitude as Rome: and at the point of the history which we have now reached the fortresses to the right of it are for the most part in the hands of the Emperor's generals, while nearly all those on the left are held for the Gothic King. This was the manner in which the latter disposed of his forces. At Urbs Vetus, the modern Orvieto, were 1000 men under the command of Albilas. At Clusium[1], that tomb of old Etruscan greatness, 1000 under Gelimer. At Tuder, now Todi, which also still preserves the memory of Etruria by its ancient walls, there were 400 Goths under Uligisalus. Fiesole, which from her high perch looks down upon Florence and the vale of Arno, was another Gothic stronghold, but we are not told by how many men it was occupied. Osimo, which similarly overlooks Ancona and the Hadriatic, was held by 4000 picked troops under Wisand[2], and here, the advance

[1] I must ask the reader to excuse some apparent inconsistency in my use of ancient and modern names. I prefer Clusium to Chiusi because 'Lars Porsena of Clusium' has made every schoolboy familiar with the former: but for the sake of Signorelli's frescoes and Francesca's death I prefer Orvieto and Rimini to the less easily recognised Urbs Vetus and Ariminum.

[2] Probably the same as Wisandus Bandalarius, the hero of the battle by the Porta Pinciana (p. 124).

BOOK V. CH. 10. 538.

of Belisarius was to be checked by a more stubborn resistance than was maintained by any of the other Gothic garrisons. At Urbino were stationed 2000 Goths under Morras. Mons Feletris (the high rock of S. Leo and the original capital of the mediaeval principality of Montefeltro[1]) was occupied by 500 Goths, and Cesena by the like number. All of these places were high city-crowned hills of the kind with which not only the traveller in Italy but the student of pictures painted by the Umbrian masters is so familiar. They all bring back to the memory of an Englishman those graphic lines of Macaulay,—

'Like an eagle's nest
Perched on the crest
Of purple Apennine.'

Such were the Gothic strongholds.

On the other side the Romans held Narni, Spoleto, Perugia, and, across the central mountain-chain, Ancona and Rimini.

A glance at the map will show how the combatants were ranged, as if for one vast pitched battle, along the line of the Flaminian Way: and the reader will not fail to notice the outlying posts held by each party: Orvieto, within seventy-four miles of Rome, garrisoned by Goths; Rimini, within thirty-three miles of Ravenna, garrisoned by Romans. If we may be permitted to take a simile from chess, each player has one piece pushed far up towards the enemy's line, threatening to cry check to the king, but itself in serious danger if not strongly supported.

Belisarius had no mind to leave his piece so

[1] See Dennistoun's Dukes of Urbino, i. 71, where there is a striking view of this most peculiar cliff-fortress.

dangerously advanced. By a brilliant display of rashness, and it must be added of insubordination, John, with his 2000 Isaurian horsemen, had advanced to Rimini; and now the commander-in-chief, wanting the Isaurians for other service, ordered them to withdraw from that perilous position. Summoning his son-in-law Ildiger, and Martin (the veteran of the Vandal war and the sharer in the flight of Solomon), who had come out with the recent reinforcements to Italy, he put 1000 horsemen under their command and gave them a commission to take his orders to John. These orders were that he should withdraw with all his troops from Rimini, leaving in it a small garrison of picked soldiers drawn from the too numerous defenders of Ancona, which had been taken possession of by Conon at the head of his Thracians and Isaurians. The very smallness of the garrison at Rimini would, Belisarius hoped, induce the Goths to pass it by unmolested; while, on the other hand, two thousand cavalry soldiers, the flower of the Isaurian reinforcements, would offer a tempting prize to the enemy, to whom they would, if left at Rimini, soon be compelled to surrender by shortness of provisions.

BOOK V. CH. 10.

538.

Belisarius recalls John from Rimini.

Ildiger and Martin, whose watchword was speed, soon distanced the barbarian army who were marching in the same direction, but who were an unwieldy host, and were obliged to make a long circuit whenever they came near a Roman fortress. As many of our actors have to traverse the same Flaminian Way in the course of the next few years, it may be well briefly to describe the journey of these two officers, though assuredly they, in their breathless haste, took not much note of aught beside castles and armies.

Ildiger and Martin on the Flaminian Way.

Probable stages of their journey.

BOOK V. CH. 10.

538. First day: up the Tiber valley.

Issuing forth from Rome by the Flaminian Gate (Porta del Popolo), and after two miles' journey crossing the Tiber by the Ponte Molle, they would keep along the high table-land on the right bank of that river till they reached the base of precipitous Soracte—

'Not now in snow,'

but which

'from out the plain
Heaved like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hung pausing[1].'

Soon after Soracte was left behind, they would pass through the long ravine-girdled street of Falerii (near Civita Castellana), and then at Borghetto, thirty-eight miles[2] from Rome, would cross the Tiber again and strike into the Sabine hills. The town, which is called in inscriptions 'splendidissima civitas Ocricolana,' now represented by the poor little village of Otricoli, at a distance of forty-five miles from Rome, might possibly receive them at the end of their first day's journey.

Second day: in the valley of the Nar.

Next day they would fairly enter the old province of Umbria[3], exchange greetings with the friendly garrison of Narni, high up on its hill, and gaze down on the magnificent bridge of Augustus, whose single remaining arch stands so proudly in the ravine through which Nar's white waters are rolling. Perchance on a still summer's day they might hear the roar of the cascades of Velinus as they rode out from the city of Interamnia (Terni). The second day's journey of forty

[1] Childe Harold, iv. 74, 75.

[2] These distances are all given in Roman miles. The Roman mile is about eight per cent shorter than the English.

[3] At this time forming part of Tuscia et Umbria.

miles would be ended as they wound up the hill of Spoleto and entered the strong fortress built upon its height by King Theodoric. They are still mounting up the valley of the sulphurous Nar, and are now in the heart of what was formerly one of the most prosperous pastoral regions of Italy. The softly-flowing Clitumnus, by which perchance Virgil once walked, viewing with a farmer's admiring eye the cattle in its meadows[1], accompanies them when they start on their next day's journey, and they pass almost within sight of Mevania, which, like Clitumnus, nourished the far-famed milk-white oxen that were slain for sacrifice on Rome's great days of triumph[2].

BOOK V. CH. 10.

538.

Third day: up the Topino and across the Apennines.

On this their third day's march they would pass the low-lying city of Fulginium, now Foligno. They might look down the valley of the Topino, past the hill on which now stand the terraced sanctuaries of Assisi, to the dim rock where the stronghold of Perugia was held by the faithful soldiers of the Emperor. But their course lies up the stream in a different direction. It is here that they begin to set themselves definitely to cross the great chain of the Apennines, whose high peaks have long been breaking the line of their northern horizon. Past the city and market which bore the name of the great road-maker Flaminius[3], they ride,

[1] 'Hinc albi, Clitumne, greges et maxima taurus
Victima, saepe tuo perfusi flumine sacro,
Romanos ad templa deum duxere triumphos.'
(Georgic ii. 146–148.)

[2] 'And deck the bull, Mevania's bull,
The bull as white as snow.'
(Macaulay, Lays of Ancient Rome.)

[3] Forum Flaminii, now curiously metamorphosed into S. Giovanni in Forifiamma.

BOOK V. CH. 10. ascending ever, but by no severe gradients, till they reach the upland region in which Nuceria, Tadinum,

538. Helvillum[1] are situated, and see rising on their left the sharp serrated ridge at the foot of which, on the other side, lies the ancient Umbrian capital of Iguvium[2]. They are breathing mountain air, and, if it be now the month of June, the snow is still lingering in patches on the summits of the Apennines; but the road is good, and easily passable everywhere, even by a large and encumbered army. And here, it may be on the summit of the pass just beyond the place[3] where the waters divide, these flowing southwards to the Tiber, those northwards and eastwards towards the Adriatic, our horsemen end their day's journey; a long and toilsome one, for we have supposed them to travel on this day fifty-six miles. At the place where they halt for the night there is a posting station[4], with a sword for its sign[5]. This sign might have been of prophetic import, for here probably, upon the crest of the Apennines, on the site of the modern village of Scheggia, was fought, fourteen years later, the decisive battle between the chosen Gothic champion and the lieutenant of the Byzantine Emperor.

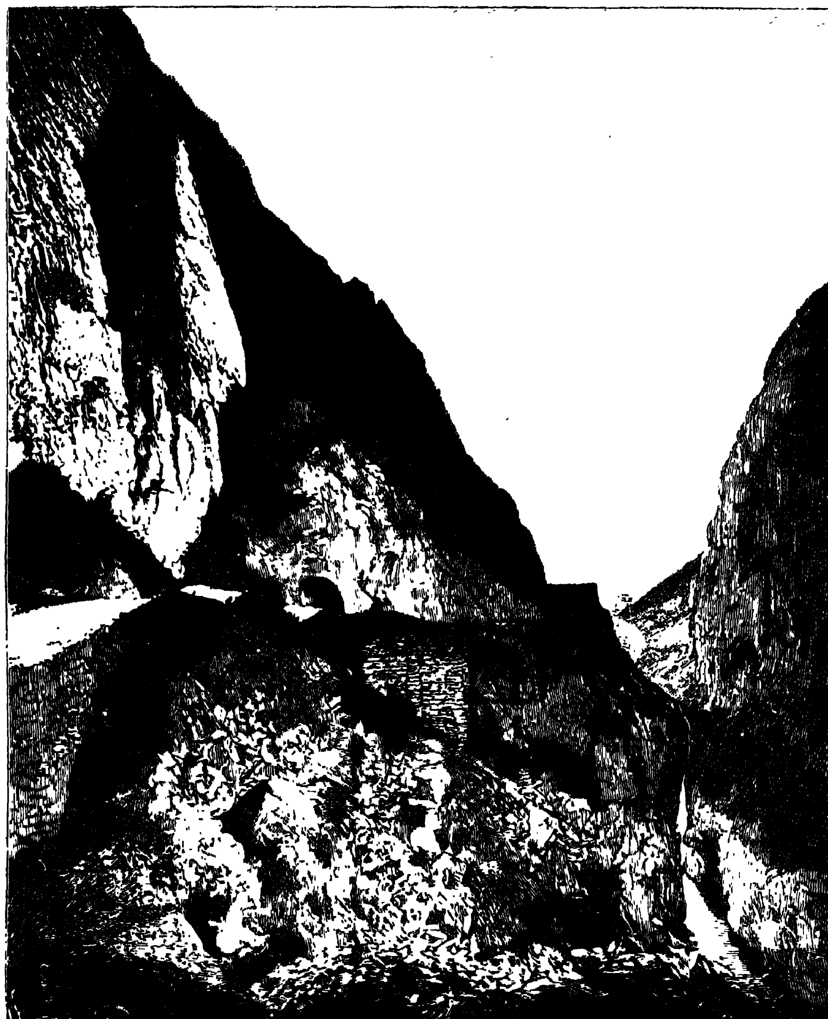
Fourth day: battle of Petra Pertusa. The fourth morning dawns, and the flying column must be early in their saddles, for they suspect that there is tough work awaiting them to-day. Down through the narrow gorge of the Burano, over at least one bridge whose Roman masonry still endures to our

[1] Now Nocera, Tadino, Sigillo. [2] Now Gubbio.

[3] Now called Casa di due Acque.

[4] 'Mutatio.' Ordinary travellers would choose a 'mansio' like that at Helvillum rather than a mere 'mutatio' to spend the night in.

[5] Ad Ensem in the Tabula Peutingeriana. Corrupted into Ad Aesim in the Itinerary of Antoninus.



PETRA PERTUSA

[To face page [illegible], Vol. IV

own days, they ride for two hours till they reach the fair city of Cales[1], situated on the flanks of the precipitous Monte Petrano. And now at last, at the station which goes sometimes by the name of Intercisa, sometimes by that of Petra Pertusa[2], and which is twenty-three miles from their morning's starting-point, they find their onward course checked, and recognise that only by hard fighting can they win through to bear the all-important message to Rimini. For what happened at Intercisa we need not draw upon our imaginations, since we find ourselves here again under the guidance of Procopius. This is his description of Petra, a description evidently the result of personal observation:—

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'This fortress was not built by the hands of man, but was called into being[3] by the nature of the place, for the road is here through an extremely rocky country. On the right of this road runs a river, fordable by no man on account of the swiftness of its current. On the left, near at hand, a cliff rises, abrupt and so lofty that if there should chance to be any men on its summit they seem to those at its base only like very little birds. At this point, long ago, there was no possibility of advance to the traveller; the rock and river between them barring all further progress. Here then the men of old hewed out a passage through

Procopius's description of Petra Pertusa (Passo di Furlo).

[1] Its site was a little above its present representative Cagli, which was built in the thirteenth century (Mochi, Storia di Cagli, pp. 13 and 14). Cagli boasts a lovely picture by the father of Raphael.

[2] Procopius generally calls it simply Petra: twice (vol. ii. pp. 609 and 636) Petra Pertusa.

[3] More literally, 'was invented by the nature of the place' (ἀλλὰ τοῦ χωρίου ἡ φύσις ἐξεῦρεν).

BOOK V. CH. 10. 538.

the rock, and thus made a doorway into the country beyond. A few fortifications above and around the gate turned it into a natural fortress of great size, and they called its name Petra [Pertusa].'

Present appearance of the Tunnelled Rock.

The slight additional fortifications which the place received from the hand of man have disappeared, but the natural features of the Passo di Furlo[1]—so the passage is now called—precisely correspond to this description of Procopius. Coming from Cagli on the south, one enters a dark and narrow gorge, as grand, though not as long, as the Via Mala in Switzerland, and sees the great wall of rock rising higher and higher on the left, the mountain torrent of the Candigliano foaming and chafing angrily below. At length, when all further progress seems barred, the end of a tunnel is perceived; we enter, and pass for 120 feet through the heart of the cliff. Emerging, we find the mountain pass ended: we see a broad and smiling landscape before us, and looking back we read upon the northern face of the rock the following inscription, telling us that the passage was hewn at the command of the founder of the Flavian dynasty, seventy-six years after the birth of Christ:—

IMP . CAESAR . AVG
VESPASIANVS . PONT . MAX
TRIB . POT . VII . . IMP. XVII . P . P . COS . VIII[2]
CENSOR . FACIVND . CVRAVIT

[1] The modern name Furlo, probably from *forulus* (mediaeval Latin for a sheath), Petra Pertusa (of Procopius), and Intercisa (of the Jerusalem Itinerary), all express the same idea, and may all be translated 'The Tunnelled Rock.'

[2] There certainly appears to be a stroke after the consular VII, but the chronology requires VII not VIII. S. Mochi (p. 56) argues that the first I, which is an imperfect letter, has been added by a later hand.

An inscription, probably of similar purport, over the southern end of the tunnel has been obliterated. BOOK V. CH. 10.

Of course to our generation, which has seen the St. Gothard and the Mont Cenis pierced by tunnels twelve miles in length, or even to the generation before us which beheld the galleries hewn in the rock for the great Alpine roads of Napoleon and his imitators, this work has nothing that is in itself marvellous. But when we remember that the Romans were unacquainted with the use of gunpowder, and consequently, as blasting was impossible, every square inch of rock had to be hewn out with axe and chisel, we shall see that there is something admirable in the courage which planned and the patience which accomplished so arduous a work[1]. 538.

Before this mountain gateway, additionally fenced

[1] According to S. Mochi, another much smaller tunnel, running nearly at right angles to that of Vespasian, was made by the Umbrians before their subjection to Rome. This is very possibly true, but Mochi's argument that it is proved by Procopius's language about 'the men of old' is not, I think, a sound one. The dimensions of this little tunnel (now almost or entirely concealed by a wall) are 26 feet long, 15 feet high, and 11 feet wide. The similar dimensions of Vespasian's tunnel are 125 feet of length, 17½ feet average width, and 17 feet average height. It is considerably wider and higher in the middle than at either end, and the northern end is somewhat lower and narrower than the southern. Mochi thinks that the Romans, before Vespasian's tunnel was constructed, carried the road round outside the rock on an artificial platform raised above the stream. [In July, 1886, a great mass of carbonised matter 100 metres square and in some places 70 centimetres thick was discovered in repairing the road near the Passo di Furlo. On examination it was found to consist of charred grain and pulse, and it was believed to represent the commissariat stores of an army, possibly Imperial or Gothic, suddenly destroyed on the approach of an enemy. *Opinione*, 30 April, 1887, and *Courier Archéologique*, Jan. 1887.]

BOOK V. Ch. 10. 538. The conflict. and guarded by some few towers and battlements, and provided with chambers for the accommodation of the sentinels, Ildiger and Martin, with their thousand travel-stained horsemen, appeared and summoned its garrison to surrender. The garrison refused: and for some time the Roman horsemen discharged their missiles to no purpose. The Goths attempted no reply, but simply remained quiet and invulnerable in their stronghold. Then the Imperialist troops—among whom there were very probably some sure-footed Isaurian highlanders—clambered up the steep hill-side and rolled down vast masses of rock on the fortress below. Wherever these missiles came in their thundering course they knocked off some piece of masonry or some battlement of a tower. In the tunnel itself, the Goths would have been safe even from this rocky avalanche: but they were in the watch-towers, and it was perhaps too late to seek the tunnel's shelter. The Goths surrender. Utterly cowed, they stretched forth their hands to such of the Imperialist soldiers as still remained in the roadway, and signified their willingness to surrender. Their submission was accepted. They promised to become the faithful servants of the Emperor, and to obey the orders of Belisarius. A few, with their wives and children, were left as the Imperialist garrison of the fortress: the rest appear to have marched under the banner of their late assailants onward to Rimini. Petra Pertusa was won, and the Flaminian Way was cleared, from Rome to the Hadriatic.

If there was yet time the successful assailants would probably push on in order to spend the night in comfortable quarters at Forum Sempronii. It is a journey

of nine miles down the broadening valley of the Metaurus. To every loyal Roman heart this is classic ground, for here Livius and Nero won that famous victory over Hasdrubal, which saved Italy from becoming a dependency of Carthage. One of the high mountains that we have passed on our left bears yet the name of Monte Nerone in memory of the battle. What more immediately concerns the soldiers of Justinian is that the side valley, the mouth of which they are now passing, leads up to Urbino, thirteen miles off, and that Morras with his 2000 Goths holds that place for Witigis. But the barbarians seem to be keeping close in their rock-fortress, and without molestation from their foraging parties, Ildiger and Martin reach the friendly shelter of Forum Sempronii. This place, of which there are still some scanty ruins left about a mile from its successor and strangely disguised namesake, Fossombrone, was in Roman times an important centre of trade and government, a fact which is vouched for by the large collection of inscriptions now preserved at the modern city[1].

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Journey continued down the valley of the Metaurus.

Next day, the fifth of their journey according to our calculations, the horsemen would travel, still by the banks of the Metaurus and under the shade of its beautiful groves of oak. Sea-breezes and a touch of coolness in the air warn them that they are approaching the Hadriatic; but still, if they look back over the route which they have traversed, they can see the deep cleft in the Apennine wall caused by the gorge of Petra, a continuing memorial of the hard-fought fight of yesterday. At the end of sixteen miles

Fifth day: they reach Fano on the Hadriatic.

[1] In the Seminario. Some of them have a curious mixture of Greek and Latin characters.

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they reach the little city by the sea which bears the proud name of the Temple of Fortune (Fanum Fortunae). Its modern representative, Fano, still keeps its stately walls, mediaeval themselves, but by the quadrangular shape of their enclosure marking the site of their Roman predecessors: and we can still behold the Arch of Augustus, added to by Constantine, under which in all probability rode the horsemen of Ildiger.

The officers go southward to Ancona, and return from thence to Rimini.

Southwards from Fano the great highway runs along the seashore to Sena Gallica (Sinigaglia) and Ancona, which latter place is distant forty miles from the Fane of Fortune. To Ancona the two officers proceed, turning their backs for a moment on Rimini. They collect a considerable number of foot-soldiers at Ancona, wend back with them to Fano, and then, turning northwards and passing through the little town of Pisaurum, traverse the forty-four miles which separate Rimini from Fano. They reach Rimini on the third day after leaving Ancona, the ninth (according to our conjectural arrangement of their journey) since their departure from Rome[1].

View of Ariminum (Rimini).

Rimini is now a tolerably bright and cheerful Italian city, with a considerable wealth of mediaeval interest. The great half-finished church (instinct with the growing Paganism of the early Renaissance), which bears the name of 'The Temple of the Malatestas,' and which shows everywhere the sculptured elephant, badge of

[1] Ἐνθένδε τε ἐς Ἀγκῶνα ἐλθόντες καὶ πολλοὺς ἀπαγαγόμενοι τῶν ἐκεῖ πεζῶν ἐς Ἀρίμηνον τριταῖοι ἀφίκοντο, τήν τε Βελισαρίου γνώμην ἀπήγγελλον. The τριταῖοι of course refers to their departure from Ancona. Eighty-four miles would be three good days' marches for the 'many foot-soldiers' by whom they were accompanied from Ancona.

that lawless house, everywhere the intertwined initials of Sigismund and his mistress Isotta,—the chapel in the market-place, where Saint Anthony of Padua, distressed that men would not hearken to him, preached to the silent congregation of the fishes,—the house of Francesca da Rimini, where she read the story of Lancelot with her ill-fated lover, and 'that day read no further,'—these are some of the chief spots hallowed by the associations of the Middle Ages[1]. But the classical interests of the city are at least equally strong. Here, in the market-place, is the little square *suggestus* on which, so men say, Julius Caesar sprang to harangue his troops after the passage of the Rubicon. Here is a fine triumphal arch of Augustus, perhaps somewhat spoiled by the incongruous additions of the Middle Ages, but still bearing on its two fronts, the faces, in good preservation, of Jupiter and Minerva, of Venus and Neptune. Above all, here still stands the Roman bridge of five stately arches spanning the wide stream of the Marecchia. Two slabs in the parapet of this bridge, which the *contadino*, coming in to market, brushes with his sleeve, record, in fine and legible characters, that the bridge was begun in the last year of Augustus and finished in the seventh year of Tiberius. Below the parapet, on the centre-stones of the arches, are yet visible the Augur's wand, the civic wreath, the funeral urn, and other emblems attesting the religious character of the rites with which the Imperial bridge-maker (*Pontifex Maximus*) consecrated his handiwork.

538.

[1] For a full description of the architectural interests both of Rimini and Ancona I must refer my readers to Freeman's Historical and Architectural Sketches (1876, pp. 135–156).

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John refuses to obey the orders of Belisarius.

When Ildiger and Martin stood before John in the Praetorium at Ariminum and delivered the message of Belisarius, that general flatly refused to obey it. It is difficult to understand how John could have excused to himself such a violation of that implicit obedience which is the first duty of the soldier: but the one defect in the military character of Belisarius—a defect which parts him off from the general whom in many respects he so greatly resembles, Marlborough—was his failure to obtain the hearty and loyal co-operation of his subordinate officers. There may have been a strain of capricious unreasonableness in his own character to produce this result: or it may have been due to the fact that he was too obviously guided in important affairs by the whims and the animosities of Antonina.

Whatever the cause, John refused to part with the 2000 horsemen under his command, or to evacuate Rimini. Damian also, his lieutenant, elected to abide with him. All that Ildiger and Martin could do was to withdraw the soldiers who belonged to the household of Belisarius, to leave the infantry brought from Ancona, and to depart, which they did with all speed[1].

Rimini besieged by Witigis.

Before long, Witigis and his army stood before the walls of Ariminum. They constructed a wooden tower high enough to overtop the battlements and resting on four strong wheels. Taking warning by their experience at the siege of Rome, they did not, this time, avail themselves of oxen to draw their tower, but arranged that it should be pushed along by men

[1] Οἱ δὲ τοὺς πεζοὺς αὐτοῦ ἀπολιπόντες κατὰ τάχος ἐνθένδε ξὺν τοῖς Βελισαρίου δορυφόροις τε καὶ ὑπασπισταῖς ἀνεχώρησαν.

inside, protected from the arrows of the foe. A broad and winding staircase inside—perhaps not unlike that which leads to the top of the Campanile of St. Mark's at Venice—enabled large bodies of troops to ascend and descend rapidly. On the night after this huge machine was completed, they betook themselves to peaceful slumber, making no doubt that next day the city would be theirs; a belief which was fully shared by the disheartened garrison, who saw that no obstacle existed to hinder the progress of the dreaded tower to their walls. Not yet, however, would the energetic John yield to despair. Leaving the main body of the garrison to guard the walls in their usual order, he secretly sallied forth at dead of night with a band of hardy Isaurians, all supplied with mattocks and trenching tools. Working with a will, but in deep silence, the brawny mountaineers succeeded, before daybreak, in excavating a deep trench in front of the tower: and, moreover, the earth which they had dug out from the trench being thrown up on the inside interposed the additional obstacle of a mound between the besiegers and their prey[1]. Neither trench nor mound seems to have gone all round the city, but they sufficiently protected a weak portion of the walls, against which the Goths had felt secure of victory. Just before dawn the barbarians discovered what was being done, and rushed at full speed against the trenching party; but John, well satisfied with his night's work, retreated quietly within the city.

538.

The moveable tower.

At day-break Witigis, who saw with sore heart-ache

[1] An interesting passage, as illustrating the way in which fosse and agger were constructed in the great limitary works of the Romans in Britain and Germany.

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The tower found useless.

the hated obstacle to his hopes, put to death the careless guards whose slumbers had made it possible to construct it. He still determined, however, to try his expedient of the tower, and ordered his men to fill up the trench with fascines. This they did, though under a fierce discharge of stones and arrows from the walls. But when the ponderous engine advanced over the edge of the trench, the fascines bent and cracked under its weight, and the impelling soldiers found it impossible to move it further. Moreover, were even the trench surmounted, the heaped-up mound beyond would have been an insuperable difficulty. As the day wore on, the weary barbarians, fearing lest the tower should be set on fire in a nocturnal sally, prepared to draw their ineffectual engine back into their own lines. John saw the movement, and longed to prevent it. He addressed his soldiers in kindling words, in which, while complaining of his desertion by Belisarius, he urged upon his men the thought that their only chance of seeing again the dear ones whom they had left behind, lay in their own prowess, in that supreme crisis of their fate when life and death hung upon a razor's edge[1]. He then led nearly his whole army forth to battle, leaving only a few men to guard the ramparts. The Goths resisted stubbornly, and, when evening closed in, succeeded in drawing back the tower; but the contest had been so bloody, and they had lost in it so many of their heroes, that they determined to try no more assaults, but to wait and see what their ally, Hunger, whose hand was already making itself felt upon the

[1] Οἷς τὰ πράγματα ἐπὶ ξυροῦ ἀκμῆς ὥσπερ ἡμῖν τανῦν ἵστανται. A Homeric simile borrowed by Procopius.

besieged, would do towards opening the gates of Rimini[1].

538.

Narrow escape of the garrison of Ancona.

Not long after the successful repulse of the Gothic attack on this Umbrian sea-port, her rival the sea-port of Picenum, Ancona, all but fell a prey to a similar assault. Witigis had sent a general named Wakim to Osimo with orders to lead the troops assembled in that stronghold to the siege of the neighbouring Ancona. The fortress of this city was very strong, situated probably on the high hill where the cathedral now stands[2], looking down on the magnificent harbour. But if the Roman castellum was strong, the town below it was weak and difficult to defend. Conon, one of the generals of Isaurians recently despatched from Constantinople, either from a tender-hearted desire to protect the peaceful citizens, or from a wish to distinguish himself by performing that which seemed impossible, included not the fortress only but the city in his line of defence, and drew up his forces on the plain about half-a-mile inland from the city. Here he professed to entrench himself, but his trench, says Procopius contemptuously, winding all round the foot of the mountain, might have been of some service in a chase after game, but was quite useless for war. The defenders of this line soon found themselves hopelessly out-numbered by the Goths. They turned and fled towards the castle. The first comers were received without difficulty, but when the pursuing Goths began to be mingled with the pursued, the

Errors of Conon, commandant of Ancona.

[1] Soon after these events Procopius puts 'the end of winter and of the third year of the war' (May–June, 538).

[2] Not actually on the same spot as the cathedral, as it is generally thought that this replaces the Temple of Venus.

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defenders wisely closed the gates. Conon himself was among those who were thus shut out, and who had to be ignominiously hauled up by ropes let down from the battlements. The barbarians applied scaling ladders to the walls, and all but succeeded in surmounting them. They probably would have succeeded altogether but for the efforts of two brave men, Ulimun the Thracian and Bulgundus the Hun, the former in the body-guard of Belisarius, the latter in that of Valerian, who by mere chance happened to have recently landed at Ancona. These men kept the enemy at bay with their swords till the garrison had all re-entered the fort. Then they too, with their bodies hacked all over, and half-dead from their wounds, turned back from the field of fight.

Procopius does not say what became of the city of Ancona, but it was probably sacked by the enemy.

Surrender of Goths at Tuder and Clusium.

We hear but little of the doings of Belisarius while these events were passing[1]. His scheme for gradually and cautiously reducing the district which lay nearest to Rome, before advancing northwards, was rewarded by the surrender of Tuder and Clusium. The four hundred Goths who occupied the former place and the thousand Goths in the latter surrendered at the mere rumour that his army was approaching, and having received a promise that their lives should be spared, were sent away unharmed to Sicily and Naples.

But now the arrival of fresh and large reinforcements from Constantinople in Picenum[2] drew Beli-

[1] Possibly Procopius was himself shut up in Rimini at this time, but quitted it and joined Belisarius before the siege was raised.

[2] Probably at Ancona, where they may have rescued the city

sarius, almost in spite of himself, to the regions of the Hadriatic, and forced him to reconsider the decision which he had formed, to leave the mutinous general at Rimini to his fate.

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Fresh reinforcements from Constantinople.

At the head of this new army[1] sent forth from Constantinople was the Eunuch Narses, a man destined to exert a more potent influence on the future fortunes of Italy than even Belisarius himself. He was born in Persarmenia—that portion of Armenia which was allotted to Persia at the partition of 384—and the year of his birth was probably about 478. As the practice of rearing boys for service as eunuchs in the Eastern Courts had by this time become common, it is quite possible that he was not of servile origin. But whatever his birth and original condition may have been, we find him in middle life occupying a high place in the Byzantine Court. After filling the post of *Chartularius*[2], or Keeper of the Archives of the Imperial Bed-chamber, an office which he shared with two colleagues and which gave him the rank of a *Spectabilis,* he rose (some time before the year 530) to the splendid position of *Praepositus Sacri Cubiculi,* or Grand Chamberlain. He thus became an *Illustris,*

Narses the Eunuch.

from the troops of Wakim, but we are not expressly told this by Procopius.

[1] The number of these reinforcements is not very clearly stated by Procopius, but it seems to have been 5000 men of various nationalities beside 2000 of the barbarous Heruli (De Bello Gotthico, ii. 13; p. 199).

[2] We get this fact from Marcellinus Comes (s. a. 552): 'Justinianus . . . Narsem eunuchum Chartularium et Cubicularium suum principem militiae fecit.' For the *Chartularii Sacri Cubiculi Tres,* see Böcking's Notitia Imperii (Orientis, 233; Occidentis, 293), and the passages there quoted from the Codes of Theodosius and Justinian.

BOOK V. CH. 10. 538. and one of the greatest of the Illustres, standing in the same front rank with the Praetorian Prefects and the Masters of the Soldiery, and probably, in practice, more powerful than any of those ministers, as having more continual and confidential access to the person of the sovereign [1].

Services at the NIKA riot, 532. It has been already stated that in the terrible days of the insurrection of the NIKA the Eunuch Chamberlain rendered essential service to his master. While the newly proclaimed Emperor Hypatius was sitting in the Circus receiving the congratulations of his friends and listening to their invectives against Justinian, Narses crept forth into the streets with a bag in his hand filled from the Imperial treasury, met with some of the leaders of the Blue faction, reminded them of old benefits of Justinian's, of old grudges against the Greens, judiciously expended the treasures in his bag, and finally succeeded in persuading them to shout 'Justiniane Imperator Tu vincas.' The coalition of the two factions was dissolved and the throne of the Emperor was saved.

Motive of the Emperor for sending Narses to the seat of war. 538. This then was the man, hitherto versed only in the intrigues of the cabinet, or at best in the discussions of the cabinet, whom Justinian placed at the head of the new army which was sent to Italy to secure the conquests of Belisarius. What was the Emperor's motive in sending so trusty a counsellor but so inexperienced a soldier, a man too who had probably reached the sixth decade of his life, on such a martial mission? The motive, as we shall see, was not stated in express terms to the Eunuch: perhaps it was not

[1] See vol. i. pp. 615–6 for a sketch of the office of the Praepositus Sacri Cubiculi.

fully confessed by the Emperor even to himself. But there can be little doubt that there was growing up in the Imperial mind a feeling that the splendid victories of Belisarius might make of him a dangerous rival for the Empire, and that it was desirable to have him closely watched, but not seriously hampered, by a devoted partisan of the dynasty, a man who from his age and condition could never himself aspire to the purple. Like an Aulic counsellor in the camp of Wallenstein, like the Commissioners of the Convention in the camp of Dumouriez, was Narses in the praetorium of Belisarius.

538.

Council of war at Fermo.

A great council of war was held at Firmum (now Fermo), a town of Picenum about forty miles south of Ancona and six miles inland from the Hadriatic. There were present at it not only the two chiefs Belisarius and Narses, but Martin and Ildiger, Justin the Master of the Soldiery for Illyricum, another Narses with his brother Aratius (Persarmenians like the Eunuch Narses[1], who had deserted the service of Persia for that of Byzantium), and some wild Herulian chieftains named Wisand, Alueth, and Fanotheus[2]. The one great subject of discussion was, of course, whether Rimini should be relieved or left to its fate. To march so far northwards, leaving the strong position of Osimo untaken in their rear, seemed like courting destruction for the whole army. On the other hand,

[1] Narses' reception of these countrymen of his into the Imperial service is the first event of his career that is recorded (Proc. De Bell. Pers. i. 12).

[2] Procopius here interposes a long but interesting digression on the Heruli, whose savage habits and inconstant temper seem to have filled him with loathing and yet to have fascinated his gaze.

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the distress of the defenders of Rimini for want of provisions was growing so severe that any day some terrible tidings might be expected concerning them. The opinion of the majority of the officers was bitterly hostile to John. 'By his rashness, his vanity, his avaricious thirst for plunder, he had brought a Roman army into this extremity of danger. He had disobeyed orders, and not allowed the commander-in-chief to conduct the campaign according to his own ideas of strategy.' They did not say 'Let him suffer the penalty of his folly,' but the conclusion to be drawn was obvious.

Advice of Narses in favour of relieving Rimini.

When the younger men had blurted out their invectives against the unfortunate general, the grey-headed Narses arose. Admitting his own inexperience in the art of war, he urged that in the extraordinary circumstances in which they were placed, even an amateur soldier might be listened to with advantage. The question presented itself to his mind in this way. Were the evil results which might follow from one or other of the two courses proposed, of equal magnitude? If Osimo were left untaken, if the garrison of Osimo were allowed to recruit itself from without, still the enterprise on that fortress might be resumed at some future time, and probably with success. But if Rimini were allowed to surrender, if a city recovered for the Emperor were suffered to be retaken by the barbarians, if a gallant general, a brave army were permitted to fall into their cruel hands, what remedy could be imagined for these reverses? The Goths were still far more numerous than the soldiers of the Emperor, but it was the consciousness of uniform disaster which cowed their spirits and prepared them for defeat. Let

them gain one such advantage as this, so signal, so manifest to all Italy, they would derive new courage from their success, and twice the present number of Imperial soldiers could not beat them. 'Therefore,' concluded Narses, 'if John has treated your orders with contempt, most excellent Belisarius, take your own measures for punishing him, since there is nothing to prevent your throwing him over the walls to the enemy when once you have relieved Rimini. But see that you do not, in punishing what I firmly believe to have been the involuntary error of John, take vengeance on us and on all loyal subjects of the Emperor.'

Letter received from John.

This speech, uttered by the most trusted counsellor of Justinian, and coming from one who loved the besieged general with strong personal affection, produced a great effect upon the council; an effect which was increased by the reading of the following letter, which, just at the right moment of time, was brought by a soldier who had escaped from the besieged town and passed unnoticed through the ranks of the enemy.

'John to the Illustrious Belisarius, Master of the Soldiery[1].

'Know that all our provisions have now long ago been exhausted, and that henceforward we are no longer strong enough to defend ourselves from the besiegers, nor to resist the citizens should they insist on a surrender. In seven days therefore, much against our will, we shall have to give up this city and ourselves to the enemy, for we cannot longer avert the impending doom. I think you will hold that our act,

[1] The superscription of the letter is conjectural.

BOOK V. CH. 10. though it will tarnish the lustre of your arms, is excused by absolute necessity.'

538. Scheme for the relief of Rimini. In sore perplexity, Belisarius, yielding to the wishes of the council of war, devised the following almost desperate scheme for the relief of Rimini. To keep in check the garrison of Osimo a detachment of 1000 men were directed to encamp on the sea-coast, about thirty miles[1] from the Gothic stronghold, with orders vigilantly to watch its defenders, but on no account to attack them. The largest part of the army was put on ship-board, and the fleet, under the command of Ildiger[2], was ordered to cruise slowly towards Rimini, not out-stripping the troops which were to march by land, and when arrived, to anchor in front of the besieged city. Martin, with another division, was to march along the great highway, close to the coast, through Ancona, Fano, and Pesaro. Belisarius himself and the Eunuch Narses led a flying column, which was intended to relieve Rimini by a desperate expedient if all the more obvious methods should fail.

March of Belisarius across the mountains. Marching westwards from Fermo they passed through Urbs Salvia, once an important city, but so ruined by an onslaught of Alaric that when Procopius passed through it he saw but a single gateway and the remains of a tesselated pavement, attesting its former greatness[3]. From thence they struck into the heart of the Apennines, and in the high region near Nocera

[1] Πόλεως Αὐξίμου σταδίους διακοσίους ἀπέχον. The distance seems too great.

[2] Subordinate officers, Herodian, Uliares, and Narses the Less (brother of Aratius).

[3] Urbs Salvia is represented by the modern village of Urbesaglia, near Macerata. It seems that the scanty Roman remains mentioned by Procopius have since disappeared.

descried the great Flaminian Way coming northwards from Spoleto[1]. Keeping upon this great highway they recrossed the Apennine chain, but before they were clear from the intricacies of the mountains, and when they were at the distance of a day's journey from Rimini[2], they fell in with a party of Goths who were casually passing that way, possibly marching between the two Gothic strongholds of Osimo and Urbino. So little were the barbarians thinking of war that the wounds received from the arrows of the Romans were the first indications of their presence. They sought cover behind the rocks of the mountain-pass, and some thus escaped death. Peeping forth from their hiding-places, they perceived the standards of Belisarius; they saw an apparently countless multitude streaming over the mountains—for the army was marching in loose order by many mountain pathways, not in column along the one high road—and they fled in terror to the camp of Witigis, to show their wounds, to tell of the standards of Belisarius and to spread panic by the tidings that the great general was on his march to encompass them. In fact, the troops of Belisarius, who bivouacked for the night on the scene of this little skirmish, did not reach Rimini till all the fighting was over; but its Gothic besiegers expected every moment to see him emerge from the mountains, march towards them from the north, and cut off their retreat to Ravenna.

BOOK V. CH. 10.

538.

Accidental encounter with some Goths.

Terror in the camp of Witigis.

[1] In strictness they had joined it at an earlier point: for the old Via Flaminia went from Nuceria through Septempeda to Ancona: but I adopt the later usage and keep the name for the main track leading northwards through Petra Pertusa to Fanum.

[2] One may conjecture, not far from Fossombrone.

BOOK V. CH. 10.

538.

Appearance of the army of Martin,

and of the fleet.

While the Goths were thus anxiously looking towards the north, suddenly upon the south, between them and Pesaro, blazed the watch-fires of an enormous army. These were the troops of Martin, who had been ordered by Belisarius to adopt this familiar stratagem, to make his line appear in the night-time larger than it actually was. Then, to complete the discouragement of the Goths, the Imperial war-ships, which indeed bore a formidable army, appeared in the twilight in the harbour of Rimini. Fancying themselves on the point of being surrounded, the soldiers of Witigis left their camp, filled as it was with the trappings of their barbaric splendour, and fled in headlong haste to Ravenna. Had there been any strength or spirit left in the Roman garrison, they might, by one timely sally, have well-nigh destroyed the Gothic army and ended the war upon the spot; but hunger and misery had reduced them too low for this. They had enough life left in them to be rescued, and that was all.

Successive arrival of the relieving columns.

Of the relieving army, Ildiger and his division were the first to appear upon the scene. They sacked the camp of the Goths and made slaves of the sick barbarians whom they found there. Then came Martin and his division[1]. Last of all, about noon of the following day, Belisarius and the Eunuch appeared upon the scene. When they saw the pale faces and emaciated forms of the squalid defenders of Rimini, Belisarius, who was still thinking of the original disobedience to orders which had brought about all this suffering, could not suppress the somewhat ungenerous taunt, 'Oh, Joannes! you will not find it easy to pay

[1] Procopius does not say this, but we may fairly conjecture it.

your debt of gratitude to Ildiger for this deliverance.' 'No thanks at all do I owe to Ildiger, but all to Narses the Emperor's Chamberlain,' answered John, who either knew or conjectured what had passed in the council of war at Fermo regarding his deliverance.

BOOK V. CH. 10.

538.

John attributes his deliverance to Narses.

Thus were sown the seeds of a dissension which wrought much harm, and might conceivably have wrought much more, to the affairs of the Emperor.

NOTE B. On the March of Belisarius.

NOTE B. 538. I have endeavoured to construct the most probable theory that I could out of the not very intelligible account given by Procopius (who himself accompanied the General) concerning Belisarius's march to Rimini. That he struck inland to the Apennines and that he passed through Urbs Salvia is clear. This route would lead him to the Flaminian Way, and I cannot think that, having gained it, the road being now clear of the obstruction at Petra Pertusa, and time being of such vast importance to him, he would again depart from it, or continue among the Apennines longer than was absolutely needful. But if so, his route would, from Fanum onwards, coincide with that of Martin, and it must be admitted that the language of Procopius, without precisely denying this, does not easily harmonise with it. Other weak points of my theory are, that the Goths expected Belisarius *from the north*, and that the soldiers were scattered all over the rocky paths[1], which does not exactly correspond with the notion of an orderly march along the Via Flaminia. Those who consider these difficulties insurmountable may suppose Belisarius to have crossed the Flaminian Way, entered Tuscany, marched by Perugia and Arezzo, traversed the Apennines in the neighbourhood of Vallombrosa and descended the valley of the Marecchia or one of the parallel streams. But they will have to face the difficulty of the loss of time involved in so circuitous a route, and they must also remember that both Cesena and Mons Feletris were garrisoned by Goths.

[1] Ἐς πάσας δυσχωρίας ξυρρέοντας.

CHAPTER XI.

DISSENSIONS IN THE IMPERIAL CAMP.

Authority.

Source:—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, ii. 12 and 18–22 (pp. 195, 217–235). BOOK V. CH. 11.

538.

THE relief of Rimini greatly strengthened the party of Narses at the council-table of the Imperial generals. It was indeed the arm of Belisarius that had wrought that great achievement, but the directing brain, as John asserted, and as most men in the army believed, was the brain of the Imperial Chamberlain. Accordingly friends and flatterers of this successful amateur general gathered round him in large numbers, with their unwise yet only too gratifying suggestions. 'It was surely,' they said, 'beneath his dignity to allow himself to be dragged about, as a mere subordinate officer, in the train of Belisarius. When the Emperor sent a minister of such high rank, the sharer of his most secret counsels, into the field, he must have intended him to hold a separate command, to win glory for himself by his great actions, and not merely to help in gathering fresh laurels for the brow of the already too powerful Master of the Soldiery. The suggestion that he should himself be general-in-chief

The party of Narses in the camp.

BOOK V. CH. 11. 538. over a separate army was one which would meet with ready acceptance from the bravest of the officers and the best part of the troops. All the Herulian auxiliaries, all his own body-guard, all John's soldiers and those of Justin, all the men who followed the standards of the other Narses and his brother Aratius, a gallant host amounting in all to fully 10,000 men, would be proud to fight under the deliverer of Rimini, and to vindicate for Narses at least an equal share with Belisarius in the glory of the recovery of Italy. An equal, or even henceforward a greater share; for the army of Belisarius was so weakened by the detachment of soldiers doing garrison-duty in all the towns from Sicily to Picenum, that he would have to follow rather than to lead in the operations which were yet necessary to finish the war.'

Belisarius summons a council of war.

These insidious counsels, urged at every possible opportunity, bore their expected fruit in the mind of the Eunuch, elated as he was by his great success in the affair of Rimini. Order after order which he received from Belisarius was quietly disregarded, as not suited to the present posture of affairs; and the General was made to feel, without the possibility of mistake, that, though he might advise, he must not presume to command, so great a personage as the *Praepositus* of the Sacred Bed-chamber. When Belisarius understood that this was really the position taken up by Narses he summoned all the generals to a council of war. Without directly complaining of the spirit of insubordination which he saw creeping in among them, he told them that he saw their views did not coincide with his as to the present crisis. The enemy, in his view, were still essentially stronger than

His speech.

their own forces. By dexterity and good-luck the Goths had hitherto been successfully out-generalled; but, let them only redeem their fortunes by one happy stroke, the opportunity for which might be offered them by the over-confidence of the Imperial officers, and, passing from despair to the enthusiasm of success, they would become dangerous, perhaps irresistible. To the mind of Belisarius the present aspect of the theatre of war brought grave anxiety. With Witigis and thirty or forty thousand[1] Goths at Ravenna, with his nephew besieging Milan[2] and dominating Liguria, with Osimo held by a numerous and gallant Gothic garrison, with even Orvieto, so near to Rome, still in the possession of the enemy, and with the Franks, of old so formidable to the Romans, hanging like a thunder-cloud upon the Alps, ready at any moment to sweep down on Upper Italy, there was danger that the Imperial army might soon find itself surrounded by foes. He proposed therefore that the host should part itself into two and only two strong divisions, that the one should march into Liguria for the relief of Milan, and the other should undertake the reduction of Osimo and such other exploits in Umbria and Picenum as they might find themselves capable of performing. We are led to infer, though the fact is not expressly stated, that Belisarius offered to Narses and the generals of his faction the choice of undertaking independently either of these alternative operations.

BOOK V. CH. 11. 538.

When the speech of Belisarius was ended, Narses said curtly, and with little deference to the General's

Reply of Narses.

[1] Γότθων μυριάδες πολλαί.

[2] The history of this siege will be related consecutively a few pages further on.

BOOK V. CH. 11. 538.

authority, 'What you have laid before us is doubtless true as far as it goes. But I hold that it is quite absurd to say that this great army is equal only to the accomplishment of these two objects, the relief of Milan and the reduction of Osimo. While you are leading such of the Romans as you think fit to those cities, I and my friends will proceed to recover for the Emperor the province of Aemilia [in other words, the southern bank of the Po from Piacenza to the Hadriatic]. This is a province which the Goths are said especially to prize. We shall thus so terrify them that they will not dare to issue forth from Ravenna and cut off your supplies, an operation which they are sure to undertake if we all march off together to besiege Osimo.'

Belisarius reads a letter from the Emperor.

So spake Narses, and thus forced Belisarius to fall back on his Imperial commission, which gave him the supreme and ultimate responsibility for the movements of the whole army of Italy. That this authority was not impaired by recent changes was proved by a letter from the Emperor, which he read to the council, and which ran as follows :—

'We have not sent our chamberlain Narses to Italy to take the command of the army. For we wish Belisarius alone to lead the whole army, whithersoever it may seem best to him ; and it behoves you all to follow him in whatsoever makes for the good of our Empire.'

Singular limiting clause in this document.

So ran the letter of Justinian, which seemed at first sight entirely to negative the claims of Narses to an independent command. But, as the Eunuch pointed out, a singular limitation was contained in the last clause, 'you are to follow him *in whatsoever makes for the good of our Empire.*' 'We do not think,' said Narses, 'that your present plan of campaign is for the

good of the Empire, and therefore we decline to follow you.' The clause had possibly been introduced in order to guard against the contingency of Belisarius aspiring to the purple. Or perhaps, now as in the case of Odovacar's embassy to Constantinople, it seemed to the guiding spirits in the Imperial Chancery a stroke of statesmanship to put forth an ambiguous document which might be interpreted by each side according to its own inclination. The Empire by the Bosporus was already developing those qualities which we, perhaps unfairly, term Oriental.

Temporary compromise arranged.

For the moment some kind of compromise seems to have been patched up. Peranius, with a large army, was sent to besiege Orvieto, which, from its nearness to Rome, was admitted by all to be a point of danger. Belisarius, with the rest of the army, moved off to attack Urbino, which was a day's journey to the south of Rimini. Narses and John, and the other generals of that party, followed or accompanied Belisarius; but when they came in sight of the city, the disaffected generals encamped on the west, leaving Belisarius and his adherents to sit down on the eastern side.

Siege of Urbino begun.

Urbino, the 'Athens of Italy,' as she was called in the short but glorious summer of her fame, acquired imperishable renown under the rule of the princes of the house of Montefeltro[1] in the fifteenth century. The influence exerted on Italian Literature by the fostering care of these princes is known to all scholars;

[1] If, as seems probable, the Μοντεφέρετρον of Procopius (ii. 11) is the same as the Montefeltro of the Middle Ages, it is curious to observe that these two strongholds, the chief fortresses of the Goths in Northern Umbria in the sixth century, were yet more closely associated in the Middle Ages under the sway of 'the Counts of Montefeltro and Urbino.'

BOOK V. CH. 11. 538.

but in the history of Painting the name of their little capital is of mightier meaning, since the utmost ends of the earth have heard the fame of Raphael of Urbino. Now, she is again not much more than she was in the days of Belisarius, a little bleak fortress looking forth upon the bare horizon of Umbrian hills, herself highest of them all. No river has she of her own, but is reached by a steep ascent of five miles from the fair valley of the Metaurus. This was the city to which, in the autumn of 538, Belisarius sent ambassadors, promising all kinds of favours to the garrison if they would anticipate their inevitable fate by a speedy surrender. Strong in their belief of the impregnability of their fortress, in the good store of provisions which they had accumulated within its walls, and in the possession of an excellent spring of water, the garrison refused to surrender, and haughtily bade the ambassadors to depart from the gates immediately.

Narses and John march away from Urbino.

Seeing that Belisarius was bent upon reducing the place, by a tedious blockade if that were needful, Narses and John decided to take their own course. John had slightly attempted Urbino before, on his first entry into Picenum, and had found it impregnable. Since then a much larger garrison and stores of provisions had been introduced. Why linger any longer on these bleak highlands, winter now approaching, and success well-nigh impossible? They broke up their camp on the west of the city, and marched away, intent upon their favourite scheme of the annexation of the Aemilia.

Operations of Belisarius.

The garrison, seeing that half their enemies had marched away, flouted and jeered those who remained. The city, though it did not stand on a precipitous cliff

like others of these Umbrian fortresses, was nevertheless at the top of an exceedingly steep hill; and only on the north side was the approach anything like level. On this side Belisarius proposed to make his attack. He ordered his soldiers to collect a quantity of trunks and boughs of trees, and out of these to construct a machine which they called the Porch[1]. The trunks being fixed upright, and the boughs, perhaps still covered with leaves, being wattled together to form the sides, the machine, worked by soldiers within, was to be moved along the one level approach to the city, and the soldiers under its shelter were to begin battering at the wall. But no sooner had they reached the vicinity of the fortress, than, instead of being met by a shower of arrows, they saw the battlements thronged with Goths stretching out their right hands in the attitude of suppliants and praying for mercy. This sudden change in the attitude of the garrison, lately so bent on resistance to the death, was caused by the mysterious failure of their one hitherto copious spring. It had for three days fallen lower and lower, and now, when the soldiers went to draw water, they obtained nothing but liquid mud. Without a spring of water defence was impossible, and they did wisely to surrender. The characteristic good-fortune of Belisarius had prevailed. Urbino was his, and some of its late defenders appear to have taken service in the Imperial army.

Urbino surrenders.

The news of the speedy surrender of Urbino brought not only surprise but grief to the heart of Narses, who was still quartered at Rimini. He urged John to

[1] *στοά*. But is it not the same which Roman military writers call *vinea*?

BOOK V. CH. 11.

538.

Cesena attempted by John.

undertake the reduction of the strong city of Cesena, twenty miles inland on the Aemilian Way. John took scaling ladders, and attempted an assault. The garrison resisted vigorously, slaying many of the assailants, among them Fanotheus, the King of the wild Herulian auxiliaries of the Empire. John, whose temper was impatient of the slow work of a siege, pronounced this, as he had pronounced so many other cities under whose walls he had stood, impregnable, and marched off for the easier exploit of overrunning the Aemilian province. The ancient city of Forum Cornelii (now Imola) was carried by a surprise, and the whole province was recovered for the Emperor; an easy conquest, but probably not one of great strategic value.

Imola taken. The Aemilia overrun.

539.

Osimo to be watched from Fermo.

The winter solstice was now past, and the new year, 539, begun. The heart of Belisarius was still set upon what he knew to be the necessary task of the capture of Osimo; but he would not in the winter season expose his troops to the hardships of a long encampment in the open country while he was blockading the city. He therefore sent Aratius, with the bulk of the army, into winter quarters at Fermo, with orders to watch the garrison of Osimo and prevent their wandering at will over Picenum: and he himself marched with a detachment of moderate size to Orvieto, which had been for many months besieged by Peranius, and the garrison of which were hard pressed by famine. Albilas their general had long kept up their spirits by delusive hopes of coming reinforcements, but they were already reduced to feed upon hides steeped in water to soften them: and when they saw the standards of the mighty Belisarius under their walls, they soon surrendered at

Belisarius marches to Orvieto, which surrenders.

discretion. It was well for the Roman cause that the blockade had been so complete, for, to an assault, the rock-built city of the Clanis would have been, in the judgment of Belisarius, quite inaccessible[1].

Milan recovered by the Imperial troops after the raising of the siege of Rome.

It was now nine months since the raising of the siege of Rome. The progress of the Imperial arms since that time had not been rapid, but it had been steady. Rimini had been relieved, Urbino taken, the Aemilia re-annexed to the Empire, Orvieto, that dangerous neighbour to Rome, reduced. Now, however, in the early months of 539, the Imperial arms sustained a terrible reverse in the reconquest of Milan by the Goths. To understand the course of events which led up to this disaster, we must go back twelve months, to the early part of 538, shortly after the conclusion of the three months' truce between Belisarius and Witigis. The reader may remember that at that time Datius, the Archbishop of Milan, made his appearance in Rome, at the head of a deputation, entreating Belisarius to send troops to rescue the capital of Liguria from the barbarians. The General, perhaps unwisely, complied, thus in appearance committing the same faults, of advancing too far and extending his line of defence too widely, which he had blamed in the case of his subordinate John, when that officer occupied Rimini. After the siege of Rome was raised he sent one thousand troops to escort Datius back to his diocese. The little army was composed of Isaurians under Ennes, and Thracians under Paulus. Mundilas, whose Praetorium was sentinelled by a few picked soldiers from Belisarius's own body-guard, commanded the whole expedition, which was also

[1] See Note at the end of this chapter.

BOOK V. CH. 11. 538. accompanied by Fidelius, formerly Quaestor under Athalaric, now Praetorian Prefect of Italy under Justinian, and the most important civil functionary in the restored province.

April (?), 538. The expedition sailed from Porto to Genoa. There the soldiers left the ships, but took the ships' boats with them on waggons, and by their means crossed the river Po without difficulty. Battle of Ticinum. Under the walls of Pavia (Ticinum) they fought a bloody battle with the Goths, in which the Imperial arms triumphed. The fugitive barbarians were only just able to close the gates of their city in time to prevent it from being taken by the conquerors. It would have been an important prize; for Pavia, even more perhaps than Ravenna, was the treasury and arsenal of the Gothic monarchy. The exultation of Mundilas at his victory in the field was damped by the disappointment of not occupying Pavia, and yet more by the death of the Illustris Fidelius, who had tarried behind to offer his devotions in a church near the field of battle. On his departure, his horse fell with him: the Goths perceived his helpless condition, and sallying forth from the city slew the recreant official, whom they doubtless considered a traitor to the house of Theodoric.

Milan and all the surrounding towns garrisoned by Imperial troops. When the expedition arrived at Milan, the city, thoroughly Roman in its sympathies, surrendered itself gladly into their hands. Bergamo, Como, Novara, and other towns in the neighbourhood, followed the example of the capital, and were garrisoned by Roman troops. In this way Mundilas reduced his own immediate following in Milan to three hundred men, among whom, however, were his two capable officers, Paulus and Ennes.

BOOK V. CH. 11.

538. Uraias the Goth sent to besiege Milan.

On hearing of the defection of Milan, Witigis despatched a large army, under the command of his nephew Uraias, for its recovery. Uraias was one of the favourite heroes of the Gothic nation, as brave and energetic as his uncle was helpless and timid. He was not the only enemy by which the re-Romanised city was threatened. Theudebert, King of the Franks, intent, as his nation used ever to be, on turning the calamities of Italy to profit, but not wishing at present openly to quarrel with the Emperor, ordered, or permitted, ten thousand of his Burgundian subjects to cross the Alps and to encamp before Milan, holding himself ready to disavow the action of the invaders should it suit his purpose to conciliate the Court of Byzantium[1]. By these two armies, the Frankish and the Gothic, Milan was, in the spring months of 538, so closely invested that it was impossible to carry any food into the city. The little band of three hundred Thracians and Isaurians being quite inadequate to guard the wide circuit of the city-walls, Mundilas was forced to call upon the citizens themselves to man the ramparts.

The Franks also appear upon the scene.

Martin and Uliaris sent to relieve Milan.

When Belisarius heard that Uraias had formed the siege of Milan, he sent two generals, Martin and Uliaris, with a large army, to relieve the beleaguered

[1] The language of Procopius is curious, as showing the loose nature of the tie which bound the Burgundians to the Frankish monarchy. 'He sent 10,000 men to help the Goths, not from among the Franks themselves, but from the Burgundians, in order not to seem to hurt the Emperor's interest. For the Burgundians were represented as going willingly and by their own independent resolution (ἐθελούσιοί τε καὶ αὐτονόμῳ γνώμῃ), not as obeying the command of Theudebert' (De Bello Gotthico, ii. 12; p. 196).

BOOK V. CH. 11. 538.

city. Martin had shared with Ildiger the perils of his bold dash through Umbria, and Uliaris had taken, apparently, a creditable part in the expedition for the relief of Rimini[1]; but neither officer now behaved in a manner worthy of his former reputation. When they reached the river Po, they encamped upon its southern bank, and there remained for a long time timidly consulting how they should cross the stream.

Message from Mundilas to the loitering generals.

A messenger despatched by Mundilas, Paulus by name[2], stole through the ranks of the besiegers, swam across the river, and was admitted to the tent of the generals. With burning words he told them that their delay was ruining the cause of the Emperor, and that they would be no better than traitors if they allowed the great city of Mediolanum, wealthiest and most populous of all the cities of Italy[3], her great bulwark against the Franks and all the other Transalpine barbarians, to fall into the hands of the enemy. The generals promised speedy assistance, a promise with which Paulus, returning by night through the ranks of the enemy, gladdened the hearts of his fellow-citizens. But still they sat, week after week, in un-

[1] Was this Uliaris the man whose drunken sportsmanship proved fatal to John the Armenian during the pursuit of Gelimer? (See vol. iii. p. 619.) Possibly; but names beginning with Uli- were common among the barbarians. Belisarius seems to be more indignant with Uliaris than with his comrade for the failure of the expedition: as if there were already some old score against him not wiped out.

[2] Not Paulus the commander of the Thracians, apparently. Procopius would hardly have called him *τῶν τινὰ Ῥωμαίων, Παῦλον ὄνομα.*

[3] *Πόλεων τῶν ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ πασῶν μάλιστα μεγέθει τε καὶ πολυανθρωπίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ παρὰ πολὺ προὔχουσα* (ii. 21). He does not, apparently, except even Rome.

accountable hesitation, cowering by the southern bank of the great river. BOOK V. CH. 11.

At length, in order to justify themselves to Belisarius, they wrote him a letter saying that they feared their forces were insufficient to cope with the great armies of the Goths and Franks that were roaming through the plains of Liguria, and begging him to order John and Justin to march from the neighbouring province of Aemilia to their aid. Such an order was sent to those generals, who openly refused to obey any command of Belisarius, saying that Narses was their leader. 539. John refuses to march to the assistance of Milan.

In these wretched delays, the fruit of cowardice and of insubordination, more than six months must have passed from the first investment of Milan. At length Narses, having received a letter from Belisarius frankly setting before him the dangers which his insubordinate policy was preparing for the Empire, gave the required order. John began collecting boats upon the Venetian coast to enable the army to make the passage of the river, but was attacked by fever—apparently a genuine, not a feigned attack—and when he recovered, the opportunity was lost. Narses gives way, but too late.

For, in the meantime, the disgracefully abandoned defenders of Milan had been undergoing terrible privations. They were reduced at last to eat dogs and mice and such creatures as no man had ever thought of before in connection with the idea of food. The besiegers, who knew how matters stood with them, sent ambassadors, calling on Mundilas to surrender the city, and promising that the lives of all the soldiers should be preserved. Mundilas was willing to agree to these terms if the citizens might be in- Mundilas treats for the surrender of Milan.

BOOK V. CH. 11. 539. cluded in the capitulation; but the enemy, indignant at the treachery of the Milanese, avowed that every one of them should perish. Then Mundilas made a spirit-stirring address to his soldiers, exhorting them to seize their arms and burst forth with him in one last desperate sally. He could not bear, by looking on, to make himself a partaker in the dreadful deeds which would assuredly be done against these unhappy subjects of the Emperor, whose only crime was having invited him within their walls. 'Every man,' said he, 'has his appointed day of death, which he can neither hasten nor delay. The only difference between men is that some meet this inevitable doom gloriously, while others, struggling to escape from it, die just as soon, but by a coward's death[1]. Let us show that we are worthy of the teaching of Belisarius, which we have all shared, and which makes it an impiety for us to be anything else but brave and glorious in our dying. We may achieve some undreamed-of victory over the enemy: and if not, we are nobly freed from all our present miseries.'

The city surrendered. The exhortation was in vain. The soldiers, disheartened by the hardships of the siege, could not rise to the height of the desperate courage of their leader, and insisted on surrendering the city to the Goths. The barbarians honourably observed towards the soldiers the terms of the capitulation, but wreaked their full vengeance on the wretched inhabitants of Milan. Terrible massacre of the citizens. All the men were slain, and these, according to the doubtless exaggerated estimate of Procopius, amounted to 300,000. The women were made slaves,

[1] In this passage (p. 233) Mundilas uses almost the very language of the companions of Mohammed.

and handed over by the Goths to their Burgundian allies in payment of their services. The city itself was rased to the ground: not the only time that signal destruction has overtaken the fair capital of Lombardy. All the surrounding cities, notwithstanding their Imperial garrisons, had to open their gates to the foe; but we do not read that they shared the same terrible fate. Liguria was once again part of the Gothic monarchy.

Reparatus and Cerventinus, brothers of Pope Vigilius.

Reparatus, the Praetorian Prefect, and successor of Fidelius, fell into the hands of the Goths, and, not being included in the army's capitulation, was cut up by the barbarians into small pieces, which were then contemptuously thrown to the dogs. Cerventinus his brother—the two were also brothers of Pope Vigilius—had shared the flight of Reparatus from Ravenna. More fortunate than his brother, he now escaped from the doomed city, and making his way through Venetia, bore the terrible tidings to Justinian. Martin and Uliaris, returning from their inglorious campaign, brought the same tidings to Belisarius, who received them with intense grief and anger, and refused to admit Uliaris to. his presence. In his letter to the Emperor he doubtless laid the blame of the fall of Milan on the divided counsels by which for the last twelve months his arm had been paralysed. Justinian, among whose many faults cruelty was not included, inflicted no signal punishment on any of the blunderers by whom his interests had been so grievously injured, but took now the step which he should have taken on the first news of the dissensions of the generals, by sending to Narses a letter of recall, and formally constituting Belisarius Generalissimo of the Imperial forces in Italy.

Belisarius reports the disaster to Justinian.

BOOK V. CH. 11.

539. Narses recalled to Constantinople.

Narses accordingly returned with a few soldiers to Constantinople. The wild Herulians who had come in his train refused to serve under any other leader, marched off into Liguria, sold their captives and their beasts of burden to the Goths, took an oath of perpetual friendship with that nation, marched through Venetia into Illyria, again changed their minds, and accepted service under the Emperor at Constantinople. An unstable and brutish people, and one for which Procopius never spares a disparaging word when an opportunity of uttering it is afforded by the course of his narrative.

NOTE C. ON THE TOPOGRAPHY OF ORVIETO.

PROCOPIUS's account of the capture of Orvieto is more allusive and less clear than is usual with him. It is only in a parenthesis (ὅπερ ἐγένετο) that we are informed of the surrender of the city, and we are left to infer that it was the result of famine. For the sake of travellers to this city, now so desolate, yet so noble in its desolation, I translate the description given by Procopius:—'Belisarius went round the city to see if he could spy out any place suitable for an assault, but came to the conclusion that it was impregnable by open attack, though it might perhaps be taken by some well-contrived stratagem. For it rises, a solitary hill out of a hollow country, evenly sloping and level above, but precipitous below[1]. But round this hill other cliffs of the same height range themselves in a circle, not in the immediate neighbourhood, but about a stone's throw distant. [The nearest hill, that on the east of the city, is quite half a mile distant, further assuredly than any catapult could throw.] On this hill the men of old founded a city, but did not surround it with walls or any other kind of fortification, thinking that Nature had herself made it impregnable. For there is only one way of access to it from the [neighbouring] heights, and if this is guarded the defenders need fear attack from no other quarter. For round all the rest of the city, except this one point, runs a broad and unfordable stream filling up the chasm between the city and the surrounding eminences. A little fortress was accordingly erected by the Romans of old at this point of access, and in it is a postern gate (πυλίς), which was guarded by the Goths.

'Belisarius therefore ranged all his army round the city, on the chance of effecting something against it by the way of the

[1] Λόφος γάρ τις ἐκ κοίλης γῆς ἀνέχει μόνος, τὰ μὲν ὕπερθεν ὕπτιός τε καὶ ὁμαλός, τὰ δὲ κάτω κρημνώδης (p. 225). Strictly speaking, the sides of the hill are only at first precipitous and afterwards slope down gently into the plain.

NOTE C. river, but having also some hope that the enemy would be compelled to surrender by hunger' [which apparently is what actually occurred].

The assertion of Procopius as to the course of the river encircling the whole city except at one point is not true now. Orvieto is situated near the confluence of the Paglia and the Chiana (Clanis). The former stream flows diagonally past the northern and eastern sides of the city, but its southern and western sides have no river below them. The course of the Paglia, however, has been a good deal changed even in recent times (so I was assured by the canons of the cathedral): and all the land about the railway station (in the fork between the two rivers) is 'made ground.' It is therefore possible that the river may in former times have wound more than half round the city, and afterwards joined the Clanis at a lower point than it does now. The one side by which it could be approached would probably be from the hills to the west, between it and Bolsena.

CHAPTER XII.

SIEGES OF FIESOLE AND OSIMO.

Source:— **Authority.**

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, ii. 23–27 (pp. 238–260).

BOOK V. CH. 12.

May, 539. Desolation of Italy by the war.

THE war had now lasted four years[1], and it was over a ruined and wasted Italy that the wolves of war were growling. The summer of 538 was long remembered as the time when Famine and her child Disease in their full horror first fell upon Tuscany, Liguria, and the Aemilia. The fields had now been left for two years uncultivated. A self-sown crop, poor but still a crop, sprang up in the summer of 537. Unreaped by the hand of man, it lay rotting on the ground: no plough stirred the furrows, no hand scattered fresh seed upon the earth, and in the following summer there was of course mere desolation. The inhabitants of Tuscany betook them to the mountains, and fed upon the acorns which they gathered in the oak-forests that cling round the shoulders of the Apennines. The dwellers in the Aemilia flocked into Picenum, thinking that the nearness of the seaboard would at

[1] Procopius puts the end of the fourth year of the war May, 539) just after the recall of Narses.

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least preserve them from absolute starvation; yet, even in Picenum, it was computed that not less than 50,000 peasants perished of famine.

Effects of famine on the people.

Procopius marked the stages of decline in this hunger-smitten people, and describes it in words which were perhaps meant to remind the reader of Thucydides' description of the Plague of Athens. First the pinched face and yellow complexion surcharged with bile; then the natural moisture dried up, and the skin, looking like tanned leather, adhering to the bones; the yellow colour, turning to a livid purple, and the purple to black, which made the poor famine-stricken countryman look like a burned-out torch; the expression of dazed wonder in the face sometimes changing to the wild eyes of the maniac;—he saw and noted it all. As is always the case after long endurance of hunger, some men, when provisions were brought into the country, could not profit by them. However carefully the nourishment was doled out to them, in small quantities at a time as one feeds a little child, still in many cases their digestions could not bear it, and those who had survived the famine died of food.

Cannibalism.

In some places cannibalism made its appearance. Two women dwelt in a lonely house near Rimini, and were wont to entice into their dwelling the passers-by, whom they slew in their sleep, and on whose flesh they feasted. Seventeen men had thus perished. The eighteenth started up out of sleep just as the hags were approaching for his destruction. With drawn sword he stood over them, forced them to confess all their wickedness, and then slew them.

Elsewhere the famine-wasted inhabitants might be seen streaming forth into the fields to pluck any green

herb that could be made available for food. Often when they had knelt down for this purpose their strength would not serve them to pull it out of the ground. And so it came to pass that they lay down and died upon the ungathered herbage, unburied, for there was none to bury them, but undesecrated, for even the birds of carrion found nothing to attract them in those fleshless corpses.

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Story of Aegisthus.

One little story told by Procopius brings vividly before us the misery caused in Italy by the movements of the hostile armies. When the historian accompanied Belisarius on his march over the Apennines for the relief of Rimini, he saw a child which was suckled and watched over by a goat. The mother of this child, a woman of Urbs Salvia, had fled before the approach of John's army—the liberating army—into the province of Picenum. In her flight she had been for a moment, as she supposed, parted from her new-born babe; but either death or captivity had prevented her from returning to the place where she had laid it down. The babe, wrapped in its swaddling-clothes, lifted up its voice and wept. A she-goat which was near ran to it, and pitying its cry, nourished it as she would have nourished her own little one, and guarded it from all other animals. When the inhabitants of Urbs Salvia found that John's army had friendly thoughts towards them, they returned to their homes; but among them was not the mother of the child. One after another of the women offered to give suck to the child, but it refused all nourishment save that of its four-footed nurse; and she with loud bleatings and gestures of anger claimed the child as her own charge. It was therefore left to the care of the goat,

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and named, like the outcast prince of Argos, Aegisthus, 'the goat's child.' Procopius, as has been said, saw this marvel on his way through Urbs Salvia. The goat was at the time at some little distance from her charge, but when Procopius and his friends pinched it and made it cry, she came bounding towards it with a bleat of distress, and standing over it, signified with butting horn that she would guard it against all assailants.

Witigis sends two ecclesiastics on an embassy to Persia.

Notwithstanding the cruel exhaustion of Italy, the parties were still too evenly matched for the struggle to come to an end. Witigis, who by his tardy and resourceless policy reminds us not a little of our Saxon Ethelred, began to cast about him for allies, a step which, if he had taken it three years ago, might perhaps have saved him from ruin. The Franks were too utterly untrustworthy; the Lombards, to whose King Wacis he sent an embassy offering great gifts as the price of his alliance, refused to break with Byzantium. He therefore called an assembly of the elders, such an assembly as our ancestors would have called a Witena-gemote, and there setting forth the difficulties of his situation, asked for the advice of his subjects. After long deliberations and many idle suggestions, a proposal was made which was fitted to the sent state of affairs. It was pointed out by one of e Gothic statesmen that the peace which Justinian concluded on the accession of Chosroës in 531 was the true cause of the disasters both of the Vandal and the Gothic monarchies. Had the Caesar of Constantinople not felt secure of attack from the Persian King, he had never dared to employ the matchless skill of Belisarius on the banks of Libyan rivers and under the walls

of Umbrian towns. It was therefore proposed and decided to send ambassadors to Chosroës to stir him up, if possible, to a renewal of hostilities against the Roman Empire. The ambassadors chosen were not Goths, whose nationality might have prevented them from traversing in safety the wide provinces of the East, but two priests of Liguria, probably Arian by their creed though Roman by speech and parentage, who for the promise of a large sum of money undertook this hazardous enterprise. One of these assumed the style of a bishop[1], to give weight to his representations, and the other accompanied him as an ecclesiastical attendant. BOOK V. CH. 12. 539.

Justinian shows a disposition to treat with the Goths.

The journey of these men to the Persian Court of course occupied a considerable time, and the full results of their mission were not apparent for more than a year after the period which we have now reached. The mere rumour, however, that negotiations were being opened between the Goths and the Persians made Justinian, who knew the weakness of his eastern frontier, so anxious to close the Italian war that he at once sent home the Gothic envoys, who for a twelvemonth had been waiting in his ante-chambers, suffering all those heart-breaking delays which seem to be engendered by the very air of Constantinople. Now they were bidden to return, offering to the Goths a long truce on terms which should be beneficial to both the combatants. Belisarius, however, who throughout this stage of the proceedings overruled with little hesitation the decisions of his master, refused

[1] Very probably he was really a bishop, whose Arian title was treated as of no account by the orthodox persons from whom Procopius received his information.

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539\. Return of Peter and Athanasius to Constantinople.

to allow the Gothic envoys to enter Ravenna till the sanctity of the persons of ambassadors had been vindicated by the return of Peter and Athanasius, the Emperor's envoys to Theodahad, who, for nearly four years, had been kept in unjustifiable captivity. They returned, and as a reward of their devotion were promoted to high offices in the Empire. Athanasius was made Praetorian Prefect of Italy in the room of Reparatus, slain at Milan; and Peter, the brave and outspoken disputant with Theodahad, was hailed as Illustrious Master of the Offices, and received the embassies of foreign rulers in the palace-hall of Byzantium.

Belisarius undertakes the reduction of the two remaining strongholds of the Goths in Central Italy.

In these negotiations the winter and early spring of 539 wore away. In May 539 Belisarius addressed himself to the capture of the two fortresses which still held out for the Goths south of Ravenna: and such was the strength of their position, perched upon their almost inaccessible heights, that all the rest of the year was consumed upon the task. The two fortresses were Faesulae and Auximum, represented by the modern towns of Fiesole and Osimo, the one overlooking the gleaming Arno, the other beholding the blue Hadriatic upon its horizon.

Fiesole.

Every Italian traveller knows the little Tuscan town to which we climb for our finest view of the dome of Brunelleschi and the tower of Giotto, pausing in our ascent to visit the villa of the Magnificent Lorenzo, and thinking of Milton's conversations with Galileo as we gaze upon

> 'The moon whose orb
> Through optic glass the Tuscan artist viewed
> At evening from the top of Fiesole.'

Instead of all this cluster of enchanting sights and memories, what had the Faesulae of the sixth century to show? She had, no doubt in greater extent, that stupendous Etruscan wall, the mere fragments of which make the Roman ruins by the side of it look like the handiwork of pigmies. She had the high fortress or Arx, a thousand feet above the Plain of Arno, where the friars of St. Francis' order now kneel for worship; the Temple of Bacchus, which was perhaps even then turned into a Christian basilica; and the Theatre, on whose stone seats we may still sit and imagine that we see from thence the couriers of Belisarius or Witigis spurring their steeds along the Cassian Road below. She had perhaps some remembrance of the day, six centuries ago, when Petreius defeated Catiline under her cliffs. More probably, her inhabitants yet pointed to the spot, near to her walls, where the vast horde of Radagaisus was surrounded and starved into submission by Stilicho[1].

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B.C. 62.

405.

Cyprain and Justin sent to besiege Fiesole.

Fiesole was held by a body of Gothic troops, of whose numbers we are not informed[2]. To compel their surrender, Cyprian, one of the old officers who had fought under Belisarius at the siege of Rome, and Justin, one of the new arrivals under Narses, were sent with some of their own soldiers (probably cavalry) and a band of Isaurian auxiliaries, together with five hundred of the regular infantry, who still represented, though faintly, the old Roman legion[3]. John, now again obedient to the orders of Belisarius;

[1] See vol. i. p. 733.

[2] It is strange that in the careful enumeration of the Gothic garrisons given by Procopius (De B. G. ii. 12; pp. 187–8) he does not mention Faesulae.

[3] These were under the special command of Demetrius.

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another John, whose mighty appetite procured him in the camp the nickname of the Glutton[1]; and Martin, apparently forgiven for his disgraceful failure before Milan, were sent with a large body of troops to cover the siege of Fiesole and to hover about the upper waters of the Po. If possible, they were to intercept the communications of Uraias with Ravenna; if that were impossible, and if he should march to the relief of his uncle Witigis, they were to keep up an active pursuit of his army. These generals found the town of Tortona (then called Dertona), by the bank of the Po, a convenient basis of operations. As it was unwalled, it could be easily occupied by them; but by the command of Theodoric it had been plentifully supplied with houses suitable for the quartering of troops[2], and these were now taken advantage of by the generals who came to overthrow his kingdom. After a few skirmishes the siege of Fiesole settled down into a mere blockade. The Roman soldiers were unable to scale the heights on which the city stood, but they could easily surround them and see that no provisions were brought into Fiesole. Pressed by famine, the garrison called on Witigis, who ordered his nephew Uraias to advance to their assistance. Uraias with a large army marched to Pavia, crossed the Po, and sat down over against John and Martin, at a distance of some seven miles from their camp at Tortona. Neither party was

Tortona made the basis of their operations.

Fiesole blockaded.

Uraias marches to Pavia.

[1] Ἰωάννης ὃν καὶ Φαγᾶν ἐκάλουν.

[2] This we learn from Cassiodorus, Variarum, i. 17. See the unfulfilled anticipations of Theodoric as to the 'durissimae mansiones' in which his enemies would be compelled to shelter themselves.

willing to begin the fight. The Romans felt that their end was gained if they prevented Uraias from attacking the besiegers of Fiesole. The Goths feared that one lost battle would shatter the last hope of their monarchy. Both armies therefore resumed that waiting game which they had played before the fall of Milan, and for which the Lombard plain (as we now call it) is so eminently adapted. BOOK V. CH. 12. 539.

While this was the position of affairs, a new enemy swept like a torrent down the ravines of the Alps of St. Bernard, an enemy whose advent for a time changed the whole aspect of the war in Upper Italy. 'The Franks,' says Procopius, 'seeing the mischief which Goths and Romans were inflicting on one another, and the length to which the war was being protracted, began to take it very ill that they should obtain no advantage from the calamities of a country of which they were such near neighbours. Forgetting, therefore, the oaths which they had sworn and the covenants which they had ratified only a short time before with both kingdoms—for this nation is the most slippery of all mankind in its observance of its plighted word[1]—they marched into Italy to the number of 100,000 men under the guidance of their King Theudebert. A few horsemen armed with spears surrounded the person of their King: all the rest fought on foot, having neither bow nor spear, but each with a sword and shield and one axe. The iron of this axe is stout, sharp, and two-edged; the handle, made of wood, is exceedingly short. At a signal given they all throw these axes, and thus at the first

The Franks reappear in Italy.

The Franks described by Procopius.

[1] Compare the 'gens Francorum infidelis' of Salvian (quoted in vol. i. p. 509).

BOOK V. CH. 12. onset are wont to break the shields of the enemy and slay his men.'

539. The Franks come apparently as friends to the Goths.

When the Goths heard that this new host under Theudebert's own command was descending from the passes of the Alps, they trusted that the Franks were about to throw their weight into the opposite scale to that of the Empire, and that the hard struggle of the last four years was at length to be terminated by their co-operation. The Franks took care not to undeceive them so long as the Po had still to be crossed, but marched as a friendly force, harming no one, through Liguria. Having entered Pavia, having been allowed quietly to obtain possession of the bridge at the confluence of the Ticino and the Po, they threw off all disguise, and slaying the Gothic women and children whom they found there, cast their dead bodies into the stream, as an offering to the unseen powers and as the first-fruits of the war. Procopius assures us that this savage deed had really a religious significance, 'since these barbarians, Christians though they be, preserve much of their old creed, still practising human sacrifices and other unhallowed rites, by which they seek to divine the future.' Thin as the varnish of Christianity was over the Frankish nation, 'the eldest daughter of the Catholic Church,' it is hardly possible that this statement can be literally true. There were many Alamanni, doubtless, and other men of tribes confessedly still heathen, in the wild horde which clustered round the horse of King Theudebert; and it may have been some of these who performed the religious part of the rite, the Christian Franks only sharing in the brutal butchery which preceded it.

Their cruelties at Pavia.

Frankish religion.

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The Goths flee to Ravenna.

When the Gothic sentinels on the bridge saw the horrid deed perpetrated by these savages, they fled without striking a blow. The Franks proceeded towards Tortona; the main body of the Gothic army, still believing in their friendly intentions, advanced to meet them, but were soon undeceived by the storm of flying axes, swung by Frankish hands, laying their bravest low. In their consternation they turned to flee, and fled right through the Roman camp, never stopping till they reached Ravenna.

The Imperial troops also scattered in flight before the Franks.

When the Imperial troops saw the flight of the Goths, deeming that Belisarius must certainly have arrived, must have conquered, and must be now pursuing, they advanced, as they supposed, to meet him. They too were cruelly undeceived, and being easily routed by the vast host of the Franks, fled across the Apennines, some into Tuscany to join the besiegers of Fiesole, others to Osimo to tell the grievous tidings to Belisarius. The Franks, having thus won an easy victory over both armies, and sacked both camps, rioted for some time in the enjoyment of all the good things that they found there[1]. When these came to an end, having no proper commissariat, and, like the brutish barbarians that they were, having no skill for aught but mere ravage of the country in which they found thêmselves, they fell short of provisions. The large draught-oxen of Liguria furnished them for a time with beef, but their only drink was the

[1] In the course of this invasion they sacked the city of Genoa. Marcellinus Comes says: 'Theudibertus Francorum Rex cum magno exercitu adveniens Liguriam totamque depraedat Aemiliam. Genuam oppidum in littore Tyrreni maris situm evertit ac praedat' (ap. Roncalli, ii. 327).

BOOK V. CH. 12.

539. Disease in the Frankish army.

water of the great river. The combination proved injurious to the digestion of the greedy soldiers, and diarrhœa and dysentery soon scourged the army of Theudebert, a third part of which, so it was reported, fell victims to these diseases.

Belisarius writes to Theudebert, who retires from Italy.

Belisarius was filled with anxiety for the fate of the besiegers of Fiesole when he heard of the Frankish invasion. He wrote a letter to Theudebert charging him with conduct which the basest of mankind could scarcely have been guilty of, in violating his sworn and written promise to join in a league against the Goths, nay more, in actually turning his arms against the Empire. He warned him that the wrath of the Emperor for such a wanton outrage would not be easily turned aside, and recommended him to take care lest, in his light-hearted search after adventures, he fell himself into the extreme of peril. The letter reached Theudebert just at a time when his fickle soldiers were loudly complaining of the loss of so many thousands of their comrades by disease. The purpose of his soul was changed, and he vanished across the Alps with the remainder of his host as speedily as he came, having done nearly as much mischief and reaped as little advantage as Charles VIII, the typical Frank of the fifteenth century, in *his* invasion of Italy. Thus already is the melancholy strain begun which for a thousand years and more was to be the dirge of Italy. Already might a truly statesmanlike Roman see the mistake which had been made in rejecting—for merely sentimental reasons—the wise policy of Theodoric and Cassiodorus, that policy which would have made the Roman the brain and the Ostrogoth

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the sword-arm of Italy. Might that scheme have had fair play,—

'Then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armèd torrents poured
Down the steep Alps, nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nationed spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water, nor the stranger's sword
Be *her* sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquished, she, the slave of friend or foe[1].'

Auximum (now Osimo): present appearance and early history.

While these events were passing in the north and west of Italy, Belisarius was prosecuting, with less success than had hitherto fallen to his lot, the slow siege of Osimo. This little city, which stands on a hill 900 feet above the sea, is ten miles south of Ancona, and about nine west of the Hadriatic shore. Few travellers now climb up to its difficult height except those who may be disposed to take it on their way, when making pilgrimage to the Holy House of the Virgin brought, as the story goes, by angels from Nazareth and deposited on the neighbouring hill of Loretto. The journey leads us through one of the fairest districts of Italy; a fertile undulating land, each height crowned with its own village, a stronghold in former days. We meet the stalwart peasants of La Marca driving their milk-white oxen in their antique chariot-like carts. Each cart is adorned with some picture of virgin or saint, or, for those who do not soar so high, of wife or sweetheart, rudely painted, but testifying to that yearning after the beautiful in Art which is the Italian's heritage. At length the road mounts steeply upward. After a toilsome ascent we stand upon the mountain crest of Osimo and

[1] Childe Harold, iv. 43 (after Filicaja).

BOOK V. CH. 12. 539. survey the wide panorama. Almost at our feet lies Castelfidardo, where, in 1860, Lamoricière, commanding the soldiers of the Pope, sustained a crushing defeat at the hands of the general of Victor Emmanuel. The curving coast of Ancona on the north, the Hadriatic filling up the eastern horizon, the long line of the Apennines on the west, and their king the Gran Sasso d'Italia in the dim south, may all be seen from our airy watch-tower. In the Palazzo Pubblico of the town we find abundant evidence of its vanished greatness. Here are many inscriptions, belonging to the age both of republican and imperial Rome, betokening the pride of the Auximates in their city, once like Philippi in Macedonia, 'a chief city in that country and a colony.' The *gens Oppia* seems for some time to have supplied the chief persons of the miniature senate, but all, of whatever family, proudly claim the title of 'Decurio of the Roman colony of the Auximates,' that word Decurio being still a badge of honour, not yet the branded mark of servitude. Looking at these tombs we recall with interest the words of Cæsar, who tells us that at the beginning of
B.C. 49. the Civil War, the Decuriones of Auximum sent a message to the Senatorial general who commanded the garrison, 'that neither they nor their fellow-townsmen could endure that after all his services to the Republic, Caius Caesar the general should be excluded from their walls.' In the years, nearly six hundred, which had passed since that important resolution was formed, Auximum had generally played its part with credit, as the leading city of Picenum. Ancona, which now far surpasses it in importance, was then its humble dependent, bearing to it nearly

the same relation that Ostia bore to Rome or Peiraeus to Athens[1]. BOOK V. CH. 12.

539. The siege of Osimo formed.

Auximum was garrisoned by some of the noblest and most martial of the Goths, who rightly looked upon it as the key of Ravenna. The Roman troops were quartered in huts all round the foot of the hill; and the garrison saw a chance of success by making a charge at evening upon a portion of the host while Belisarius was still engaged with his body-guard in measuring the ground for the camp. The attack was bravely repelled, and the garrison retired, but the moment they stood again on their precipitous hill-top the battle again inclined in their favour. Night fell: a number of the garrison, who had gone to forage the day before, returning, found the camp-fires between them and Auximum. A few managed to steal through the lines of the Romans into the city, but the greater number took refuge in some woods near, and were there found by the besiegers and killed.

Belisarius resolves to blockade the city.

Reluctantly Belisarius, having carefully surveyed the ground, came to the conclusion that the place being absolutely unapproachable all round, except by a steep ascent, was invulnerable to any sudden stroke, and must be blockaded. The blockade took him seven months, months of weariness and chafing delay, during which the Frank was descending into Lombardy, the Courts of Ravenna and Ctesiphon were spinning their negotiations for alliance, and the position of the Empire under the grasping policy of Justinian was becoming every day more full of peril.

There was a green patch of ground not far from the

[1] This change in the relative importance of the two cities is pointed out in Lord Mahon's Life of Belisarius (p. 248).

BOOK V. CH. 12.

539. The foraging ground.

walls of Osimo which was the scene of many a bloody encounter. Each party by turns resorted to it to obtain forage for their horses and cattle, sometimes, in the case of the hard-pressed garrison, to pluck some herbs by which men could allay the pangs of hunger; and each party when thus engaged was of course harassed by the enemy. Once the Goths, seeing a number of Romans on the foraging-ground, detached some heavy waggon-wheels from their axles and rolled them down the hill upon their foes: but the Romans easily opened their ranks and let the waggon-wheels thunder past them into the plain, guiltless of a single besieger's life. In reading of these *naïve* expedients of the Goths for inflicting injury on their foes, one feels that they were but overgrown schoolboys, playing the game of war with a certain heartiness and joviality, but quite ignorant of the conditions of success.

The ambuscado.

Their next move, however, showed a little more tactical skill. They stationed an ambuscade in a valley at some little distance from the town, by judicious appearance of flight drew the Romans towards it, and then with their combined forces inflicted heavy loss on the besiegers. The misfortune of the position was that the Romans who remained in the camp could plainly see the ambuscade, and shouted to their comrades not to venture further in that direction: but in the din of battle the shouts were either unheard or supposed to be shouts of encouragement, and thus the Gothic stratagem succeeded.

The advice of Procopius as to the trumpet-calls.

While Belisarius was brooding over this disappointing day's work, his secretary, the literary Procopius, approached him with a suggestion drawn from his

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reading of the war-books written by 'the men of old.' 'In ancient times,' said he, 'armies used to have one note on the bugle for advance, another for recall. It may be that your troops, largely recruited from among the barbarians, are too untutored to learn this difference of note, but at least you may have a difference of instrument. Let the light and portable cavalry trumpet, made as it is only of wood and leather, be always used to sound the advance: and when the deep note of the brazen trumpet of the infantry is heard, let the army know that that is the signal for retreat.' The general adopted his secretary's suggestion, and calling his soldiers together delivered a short harangue in which he explained the new code of signals, at the same time cautioning them against headlong rashness, and assuring them that, in the skirmishing kind of warfare in which they were now engaged, there was no shame in retreat, or even in flight when the exigencies of the position required it. Of those exigencies the general must be the judge, and he would give the signal for retreat, when he deemed it necessary, by a blast from the infantry trumpet.

The Moor and the suit of golden armour.

In the next skirmish at the foraging-ground under the new tactics the Romans were victorious. One of the swart Moorish horsemen from Mount Atlas seeing the dead body of a Goth covered with gold armour —haply such as Theodoric was buried in at Ravenna— began dragging him from the field by the hair of his head. A Goth shot an arrow which pierced the spoiler through the calves of both of his legs. Still, says Procopius, the Moor persisted in dragging the golden-armoured hero by his hair. Suddenly the trumpet

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of retreat was heard, and the Romans hurried back to the camp carrying off with them both the Moor and his prize[1].

The garrison's first message to Ravenna.

The garrison, who were beginning to be hard pressed with hunger, resolved to send messengers to Ravenna to claim the help of their King. The letters were written and the messengers prepared. Upon the first moonless night the Goths crowded to the ramparts and uttered a mighty shout, which made the besiegers think that a sally was in progress or that assistance was arriving from Ravenna. Even Belisarius was deceived, and fearing the confusion of a nocturnal skirmish he ordered his soldiers to keep quiet in their quarters. This was exactly what the barbarians desired, since it enabled their messengers to steal through the Roman lines in safety. The letter which they delivered to Witigis was worded in that independent tone which the German warriors feared not to adopt to their King. 'When you placed us, O King, as a garrison in Auximum, you asserted that you were committing to us the keys of Ravenna and of your kingdom. You bade us hold the place manfully, and you promised that you with all your army would promptly move to our assistance. We, who have had to fight both with hunger and Belisarius, have been faithful to our trust, but you have not lifted a finger to help us. But remember, that if the Romans take Auximum, the keys of your house, there is not a

[1] The responsibility for this story must rest with Procopius (De B. G. ii. 23); I cannot believe that a man could walk even two steps who had both his legs transfixed by an arrow: Γότθος τις αὐτὸν ἀκοντίῳ βαλὼν μυῶν τε οἳ ὀπισθέν εἰσι τῶν κνημῶν ἑκατέρων, ἐπιτυχών, ἐνέρσει τοῦ ἀκοντίου ἄμφω τὼ πόδε ξυνέδησεν. Ἀλλ' οὐδέν τι ἧσσον Μαυρούσιος τῶν τριχῶν ἐχόμενος τὸν νεκρὸν εἷλκεν.

chamber therein from which you will be able to bar them.' Witigis read the letter, heard the messengers, sent them back to buoy up the beleaguered garrison with hopes of speedy assistance, but took not a single step in fulfilment of his promise. He was afraid of John and Martin, hovering over the valley of the Po: he was perhaps more justly afraid of the difficulty of provisioning his troops on the long march into Picenum. To the Romans who had possession of the sea, and who could import all that they needed from Sicily and Calabria, this difficulty was far less formidable than to him. Still, if the relief of Osimo was dangerous, its reduction meant certain ruin. Anything would have been better than to let his brave soldiers, trusting to his plighted word, starve slowly on their battlements, while he himself, like another Honorius, skulked behind the lagoons of Ravenna.

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539. Witigis promises to help them, but does nothing.

After these events came the mad torrent of the Frankish invasion, bringing equal consternation to Goths and Romans, and affording to Witigis something more than a mere pretext for the postponement of his promise. The garrison of Osimo of course knew nothing of this invasion; and Belisarius, informed of the previous embassy by deserters, watched the fortress with added diligence to prevent any second message from being sent. In these circumstances, the Goths, bent on bringing their case again before their King, began to parley with a certain Burcentius, a soldier (probably an Armenian) who had come to Italy with Narses the Less, and who was stationed in a lonely place to prevent the foraging expeditions of the garrison. Large moneys in hand and the promise of more on his return from Ravenna induced this man

Burcentius the traitor.

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539. Second message to Witigis.

to turn traitor and to bear the letter of the Goths to Witigis. The letter ran thus: 'You will best inform yourself as to our present condition by enquiring who is the bearer of this despatch. For it is absolutely impossible for any Goth to get through the enemy's lines. Our best food is now the herbage which grows near the city wall, and even this cannot be obtained without the sacrifice of many lives. Whither such facts as these tend we leave to be judged of by you and all the Goths in Ravenna.'

The King's reply.

To this short and pathetic letter Witigis returned a long and shifty answer, laying the blame of his past inactivity on Theudebert and the Franks; promising now with all speed to come to the assistance of his brave soldiers, and beseeching them to continue to act worthily of the reputation for valour which had caused him to single them out from all others as the defenders of his kingdom.

With the King's letter and many pieces of Gothic gold in his girdle, Burcentius returned to his station by the foraging-ground. His six days' absence was easily explained to his comrades. He had been seized with illness, and had been obliged to spend those days, off duty, in a neighbouring church. At a suitable time he gave the King's letter to the garrison, who were greatly encouraged thereby, and persevered many days longer in their diet of salad, ever hoping that the trumpet of Witigis would be heard next day beneath their walls.

The third message.

Still the slothful and cowardly King came not. Once more the Goths employed the services of the traitor Burcentius, who this time bore a letter from them saying that they would wait five days, no longer,

and would then surrender the city. Again Burcentius returned after his opportune illness, bringing yet further flattering words and false hopes from the Nithing (as our Saxon forefathers would have called him) in his palace at Ravenna. Again they were duped, and waited on in the extremity of hardship, resisting all the kind and coaxing words of Belisarius, to whom it began to be a matter of life and death to get the siege speedily ended.

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Belisarius in perplexity.

Utterly perplexed by this extraordinary pertinacity of the Goths, and longing to find out its cause, the General discussed with his subordinate Valerian, whether it would be possible to capture some prisoner of distinction and extort from him the desired knowledge. Valerian mentioned that he had in his train some Slovenes from the banks of the Danube, and that these men were wont to crouch behind some small rock or shrub and stealing forth from thence to capture unwary travellers, either Romans, or barbarians of another tribe. This savage accomplishment, as it seemed, might now be turned to useful account. A tall and powerful Slovene was chosen and told that he should receive a large sum if he would capture a living Goth. He went forth accordingly in the dim morning twilight, and, bending his stalwart limbs into the smallest possible compass, hid behind a bush close to the foraging-ground. Thither came soon a Gothic noble to pick some herbs for his miserable meal. He cast many a look towards the Roman camp, to see if danger threatened him from thence, but suspected nothing of his nearer foe. While he was stooping down, suddenly the Slovene was upon him, grasped him tightly round the waist, and in spite of his

A Gothic noble kidnapped.

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struggles carried him into the camp to Belisarius[1]. The prisoner, when questioned as to the cause of his countrymen's extraordinary pertinacity, revealed the history of the last two messages to Ravenna, and pointed to Burcentius as the bearer of them. The wretched Armenian confessed his guilt, and was handed over to his comrades to be dealt with according to their pleasure. The pleasure of these barbarians was that he should be burned alive in the full sight of the garrison, his employers. 'Thus,' says Procopius, 'did Burcentius reap the fruit of his greediness for gain.'

Burcentius burned alive.

Belisarius endeavours to cut off the water supply.

Still the indomitable Goths would not surrender the fortress which had been confided to them by the faithless Witigis—faithless, but yet their king. Belisarius therefore determined to cut off their supply of water, and thus force them to a capitulation. There was outside the city, but near the walls, a cistern constructed of massive masonry, from which the Goths used to draw water, each excursion for the purpose being a sortie, which had to be effected hurriedly and by stealth. The General's design was to break down the masonry of this cistern sufficiently to prevent any large accumulation of water therein, as the Goths would never have time to wait and fill their amphorae from the slowly-running stream. Drawing up all his troops in battle array and threatening the town with an attack, he kept the garrison occupied while five

[1] Procopius' story of the manner in which these Slovenes captured their prisoners seems to require the use of a noose of some kind to render it probable, but none such is mentioned by him. All seems to have been done by sheer physical strength, aided by surprise.

Isaurians, equipped with axes and crowbars, stole into the cistern. They were, however, perceived by the garrison, who guessed their errand, and assailed them with a cloud of missiles. The strong vaulted roof over their heads, placed there by the builders of the cistern to keep its waters from the noon-day sun, proved to the Isaurians an effectual shelter. Hereupon the garrison issued forth to dislodge them. So fierce was their onset that the besiegers' line wavered before them. Belisarius rushed to the spot, by voice and gesture exhorting them to stand firm. While he was thus engaged an arrow from a Gothic bow came whizzing[1] towards him, and would certainly have inflicted on him a fatal wound in the belly, had not one of his guards, named Unigat, seeing the General's danger, interposed his hand and in it received the hostile weapon. The faithful guardsman was forced to quit the field in agony, and lost for the remainder of his days the use of his hand; but the General's life was saved:—his narrowest escape this, since he rode the dark roan charger on the first day of the siege of Rome. At the same time, seven Armenian heroes (soldiers of Narses the Less and Aratius) did great deeds of valour, charging uphill against the Goths, dispersing their forces on the level ground, and at length, about noon-day, turning the battle, which had begun at dawn and seemed at one time likely to be a Roman defeat, into a Roman victory. Great, however, was the disappointment of Belisarius when he found that all this bravery had been wasted. The Isaurians, emerging from the cistern, were obliged to confess that in six hours of labour they had not been

Narrow escape of Belisarius.

[1] ξὺν ῥοίζῳ πολλῷ.

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able to loosen a single stone. 'For the masons of old time,' says the historian, 'put such thoroughly good work into this as into all their other buildings, that they yielded not easily either to time or to the hand of an enemy.' This remark, which is fully confirmed by all that we see of the earlier work of the Romans in our own land, is perhaps meant as a covert criticism on the ostentatious but unenduring edifices of Justinian[1].

Belisarius poisons the well.

Thus foiled in his attempt to destroy the cistern, Belisarius, regardless of those general instincts of humanity which have endeavoured to formulate themselves under the title of 'The Laws of War,' resolved to poison the well. The bodies of dead animals, poisonous herbs, and heaps of quicklime[2] were thrown by his orders into the cistern. Still, however, the brave garrison held out, drawing their water from one tiny well in the city, and looking forth daily for the Gothic banners on the northern horizon.

The surrender of Fiesole brings with it that of Osimo.

At length the end of this tedious siege came from an unexpected quarter. The garrison of Fiesole, unable to endure their hardships any longer, surrendered to Cyprian and Justin, on condition that their lives should be spared. Bringing their new prisoners with them, the generals marched to Osimo. The sight of their captive fellow-countrymen, aided by the remonstrances of Belisarius, broke down the long endurance of the defenders of the capital of Picenum,

[1] Mr. Bryce informs me that some remains of this cistern are still visible.

[2] Λίθον κατακεκαυμένην ἣν πάλαι μὲν τίτανον ταν῀υν δὲ ἄσβεστον καλεῖν νενομίκασιν. Ἄσβεστος is still the ordinary term used in modern Greek for quicklime.

and they offered to surrender if they might march forth with all their possessions to join their countrymen at Ravenna. Belisarius was earnestly desirous to end the siege at once, before an alliance which he dreaded between Franks and Goths should have had time to consolidate itself. On the other hand, he was reluctant to allow so many noble Goths, the bravest of the brave, to swell the ranks of the defenders of Ravenna; and his soldiers loudly murmured that it was monstrous, after subjecting them to the hardships of a siege, and such a siege, to deprive them of a soldier's heritage, the spoil. At length the two parties came to a fair arrangement. The Goths were to surrender half their property to the besiegers, taking a solemn oath to conceal nothing, and were allowed to retain the other half. So satisfied were they with these terms, and probably also so exasperated at the faithlessness of their King, that they appear to have actually taken service under the standards of the Emperor. There were evidently still many Goths to whom only two relations towards the Empire suggested themselves as possible, hostile invasion of its territory, or settlement as *foederati* within its borders.

The siege of Osimo had lasted, according to one authority, seven months. It probably began in May, 539, and ended in December of the same year [1].

[1] Marcellinus Comes (ap. Roncalli, ii. 327): 'Belisarius obsidens Auximum septimo mense ingreditur, similiterque et Faesulam.'

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FALL OF RAVENNA.

Authorities.

Source:—

BOOK V. CH. 13.

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, ii. 28–30 (pp. 260–276).

Guides:—

For the history of Cassiodorus, two excellent monographs, one by Thorbecke (Heidelberg, 1867), and the other by Franz (Breslau, 1872), the former dealing chiefly with the political, and the latter with the monastic life of Cassiodorus.

540 Preparations for siege of Ravenna.

OSIMO being taken, Belisarius collected all his energies for the siege of Ravenna. Ravenna, defended by a power having command of the sea, would have been practically impregnable; Ravenna, beleaguered by land and by sea, had delayed Theodoric for three years before its walls, and had at length only surrendered on a capitulation which, if faithfully observed, would have left Theodoric but half a victory. Belisarius therefore, while making all his preparations for a siege, determined not to leave untried the path of negotiation, which in the present state of the Emperor's affairs, with Persia menacing and the Franks eager for mischief, might shorten this dangerous last act of the drama. The Franks, as the General had been informed, were sending their embassy to Witigis, proposing an

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Embassy of the Franks to Ravenna, met by ambassadors of Belisarius.

alliance for the reconquest and division of Italy; and Belisarius sent his ambassadors to confront them there, and argue against Metz for Constantinople. At the head of the Imperial embassy was Theodosius, an officer of high rank in the semi-regal household of Belisarius, but whose guilty intimacy with Antonina, the mistress of that household, had already been spoken of by his retinue under their breath, and was at a later period to be blazed abroad in court and market-place, and to exercise a disastrous influence on the fortunes and character of the uxorious General.

Magnus and Vitalius in the valley of the Po.

As was before said, Belisarius was not trusting wholly to negotiation. Magnus and Vitalius, with two large bodies of troops, were sent to operate on the two banks of the Po, and to prevent provisions from its fertile valley being introduced into Ravenna. Their efforts were marvellously seconded by a sudden failure of the waters of the river, which caused the Gothic flotilla, prepared for the transport of provisions, to be stranded on the banks and to fall a prey to the Roman soldiers. In a very short time the river resumed its usual course, and navigable once more, served the purposes of the besiegers as it had failed to serve those of the besieged[1]. It was therefore in a city which was already feeling some of the hardships of scarcity, if not yet of actual famine, that the envoys of Belisarius and of Theudebert set forth their commissions.

The Franks declared that 'their master was even

[1] In his reflections on this event, which he says never happened before or after, Procopius remarks as to the all-mastering power of Fortune: *δήλωσιν ἄντικρυς ποιουμένη ὅτι δὴ αὐτὴ πρυτανεύσει ἀμφοτέροις τὰ πράγματα* (De B. G. ii. 28).

BOOK V. CH. 18. now sending 500,000 warriors over the Alps, whose hatchets flying through the air would soon bury the Roman army in one heap of ruin. Theudebert had heard with sorrow of the sufferings of his good friends the Goths at the hands of the Romans, the natural and perfidious enemy of all barbarian nations. He offered them therefore victory if they would accept his companionship in arms, and a peaceable division of the land of Italy between them; or, on the other hand, if they were mad enough to choose the Roman alliance, defeat, ignominious defeat, to be shared with their bitterest and most irreconcilable foes.'

540. Arguments of the Franks.

Reply of the Byzantines.

The ambassadors of Belisarius had an easy task in enlarging on the faithlessness of the nation of Clovis.

'Trust not for freedom to the Franks,
They have a king who buys and sells,'

could be said as truly *by* the Greeks in the sixth century as it was said *to* the Greeks in the nineteenth. The present depressed condition of the Thuringians and Burgundians showed too plainly what an alliance with this all-grasping nation foreboded to those who were foolish enough to enter into such a compact. The corpses of all the brave Gothic warriors lately slain upon the banks of the Po attested the peculiar Frankish manner of helping distressed allies. What god they could invoke, or what pledge of fidelity they could give that had not already been forsworn and violated by them, the ambassadors could not conjecture. This last proposition, that the Goths should share all their lands with the Franks, was the most impudent of all their proceedings. Let Witigis and his subjects once make trial of it, and they would find,

too late, that partnership with the insatiable Frank meant the loss of all that yet remained to them. BOOK V. CH. 18.

540. Witigis resolves to accept the Emperor's terms.

When the ambassadors had finished their harangues, Witigis conferred with the leading men of the nation as to their proposals. Would that the debates of this Gothic Witenagemote had been preserved to us! We can, however, only record the result of their deliberations, which was, that the Emperor's offers should be accepted and the Frankish envoys dismissed. Parleys as to the terms of peace followed; but Belisarius, less generous or more wary than the Gothic King, when similar negotiations were going forward two years previously under the walls of Rome, refused to relax by a single sentinel the rigour of his blockade of Ravenna. Ildiger commanded the flying columns which manœuvred on each bank of the Po, while Vitalius was sent into Venetia to force or persuade the cities of that province to resume their allegiance to the Empire. During this pause in the contest the large magazines of provisions collected in Ravenna were destroyed by fire. In the Roman army it was generally believed that this was brought about by the bribes of Belisarius. The Goths differed in opinion from one another, some attributing the disaster to a stroke of lightning, others to domestic treachery, in connection with which the name of Matasuentha, the ill-mated wife of Witigis, was freely mentioned. They scarcely knew which explanation of the event should fill them with the gloomier forebodings, since one indicated the faithlessness of man, the other the anger of Heaven.

Conflagration of the Gothic magazines.

The brave and loyal Uraias, hearing of the blockade of Ravenna, was about to march to its assistance with

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Abortive attempt of Uraias to relieve Ravenna.

4000 men, partly natives of Liguria, partly Goths whom he had drawn from garrison duty in the various fortresses of the Cottian Alps. Unfortunately on their march the troops heard that the garrisons of these fortresses, at the instigation of Sisigis, the general upon the Frankish frontier, were surrendering themselves wholesale to a guardsman of Belisarius named Thomas, who had been sent with quite a small body of troops to receive them into the Imperial allegiance. Anxious for the safety of their wives and children, the soldiers of Uraias insisted on retracing their steps westward. They were too late: John and Martin, who were still stationed in the upper valley of the Po, hurried to the Cottian forts before them, took the very castles in which the families of these soldiers were lodged, and carried them into captivity. With such precious pledges in the hands of the Romans, the barbarians refused to fight against them. They suddenly deserted the standards of Uraias, and seeking the encampment of John begged to be admitted as *foederati* into the Imperial service. Baffled and powerless, Uraias was obliged to retire with a few followers into the fastnesses of Liguria. Thus all hope of assistance from him for the blockaded city was at an end.

Embassy from Constantinople.

About this time, probably early in the year 540, came two senators from Constantinople, Domnicus and Maximin, bearing the Emperor's offer of terms of peace. These terms were unexpectedly favourable to the Goths. Witigis was to be allowed to retain the title of King and half the royal treasure, and to reign over all the rich plains to the north of the Po; the other half of the royal treasure and all Italy south of the Po, with Sicily, were to be reunited to the Empire.

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Reasons for the favourable terms offered to the Goths.

Such concessions, at this late period of the struggle, might well seem almost absurd to one who watched the fortune of the game in Italy alone. But the Emperor knew well the other and terrible dangers which threatened his dominions. A swarm of ferocious Huns were about to burst upon Illyria, Macedon, and Thrace, extending their ravages up to the very suburbs of Constantinople [1]. Even more formidable than these transitory marauders was the more deeply calculated advance of the Persian potentate. Chosroës was moving to battle, stirred thereto in part by the representations of Witigis, in part by his own hereditary hatred of the Empire: and in June of this year he was to fall, with the pitiless fury of an Oriental despot, on the wealthy and luxurious city of Antioch. Decidedly Justinian had good reason for wishing to have his matchless general and as many as possible of his soldiers recalled from Italy. Decidedly he was right in offering easy terms to the Goths; and Italy might possibly have been spared some centuries of misery could those terms have formed the basis of a peace.

Belisarius overrules his master.

The obstacle came not from the Goths, who gave a joyful assent to the proposals of the ambassadors. It came from Belisarius, who had set his heart on ending the Italian war with a complete and dramatic success, and on leading Witigis, as he had already led Gelimer, a captive to the feet of Justinian. He refused to be any party to the proposed treaty; and the Goths, fearing some stratagem, would not accept it without his counter-signature. Murmurs were heard in the tents of the Imperial captains against the pre-

[1] See Procopius, De Bello Persico. ii. 4 (p. 167).

BOOK V. CH. 18. 540. sumption of the General who dared to disobey the orders which proceeded from the sacred presence-chamber of the Emperor, and who was bent on prolonging the war for sinister purposes of his own.

Council of war. Knowing that these injurious reports were flying about the camp, Belisarius called a council of war, at which he invited the presence of the ambassadors. He said to his discontented subordinates, with apparent frankness, 'No one knows better than myself the great part which chance plays in war, and how a cause apparently quite hopeless will sometimes revive, and prove after all victorious. By all means let us take the best possible advice in debating so important a subject as the proposed treaty. Only one thing I must protest against. No man must hold his peace now, and then lie in wait to censure me after the event. Let every one speak his opinion now, on the question whether we can recover the whole of Italy, or whether it is wiser to abandon part of it to the barbarians; and, having spoken it, let him stand by it like a man.' Thus adjured, the generals without exception stated that they thought it politic to let the treaty of peace go forward, upon the proposed conditions. Belisarius desired them to sign a paper to that effect, and they signed it.

Increasing famine in Ravenna. While these deliberations were going on in the Imperial camp, the scarcity was growing into famine within the city. Sore pressed by hunger, yet determined not to surrender unconditionally to the Emperor, fearing, above all things, to be transported from their own beloved Italy to the distant and unknown Constantinople, the Goths conceived the extraordinary idea of offering to their victor, to Belisarius, the Empire

of the West. Even Witigis supported this proposal, and besought the great General to accept the proffered dignity. The scheme had a certain brilliant audacity about it, and was the most striking testimony ever offered to the strategical genius of Belisarius. Yet it probably seemed less strange and (if we may use the word by anticipation) less romantic to contemporaries than it does to us. All the traditions of the Ostrogoths, except for the thirty years of Theodoric's reign, pointed to the Empire as the natural employer of armies of Gothic *foederati*. Even Theodoric, in his mode of working the machinery of the state, had shown himself an Emperor of the West in everything but the name. A Teutonic kingdom in Roman lands was still a comparatively new and untried thing, while an Empire fought for by Gothic arms was a familiar conception.

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The Goths would make Belisarius Emperor of the West.

The feelings with which Belisarius received this startling proposition were probably of a mingled kind. As Procopius says, 'he hated the name of an usurper with perfect hatred, and had bound himself by the most solemn oaths to the Emperor to attempt no revolution in his lifetime.' He probably looked upon himself as the destined successor of his master, should he survive Justinian, and he knew what ruin the revolutionary attempts upon the purple, made by successful generals, had wrought for the Empire. On the other hand, he saw that a feigned compliance with the wishes of the Goths would at once open to him the gates of Ravenna, and, possibly, the thought was not altogether absent from his mind that it might be desirable at any moment to turn that feigned compliance into reality.

How Belisarius received the offer.

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The other generals ordered to disperse.

In order to keep his hands clear, he ordered the generals of the party which still called itself anti-Belisarian to disperse in various directions in order to obtain provisions for the army. These generals were John and Bessas, Narses the Less, and Aratius; and they were accompanied by Athanasius, the recently-appointed Praetorian Prefect of Italy[1]. Before they went, he convoked another council of generals and ambassadors, and asked them what they would think of the deed if he succeeded in saving all Italy for the Empire and carrying all the Gothic nobles, with their treasures, captive to Constantinople. They replied that it would be a deed past all praise, and bade him by all means to accomplish it if he could. He then sent private messengers to the Goths offering to do all their will. The Gothic envoys returned with their vague talk of peace for the multitude and their secret proposals for Belisarius's own ear. He willingly stipulated that the persons and property of the Goths should be held harmless, but postponed till after the entry into Ravenna, the solemn oath (the coronation-oath, as we should term it), by which he was to pledge himself to reign as the impartial ruler of Goths and Romans alike. The suspicions of the barbarians were not excited even by this postponement. They imagined that he was hungering and thirsting for empire, and never supposed that he himself would throw any difficulties in the way of winning it.

Second council of war.

The Gothic offer apparently accepted.

Of all the many dramatic situations in the life of

[1] It is generally supposed that Belisarius only played with the Goths in this business of his election: but unless he had some thoughts of *possibly* accepting their offer, I do not see why he should have sent these officers away.

the great general—and they are so many as to excite our marvel that no great poet has based a tragedy on his story—the most dramatic was surely his entry into Ravenna in the spring of 540[1]. The Roman fleet, laden with corn and other provisions, had been ordered to cast anchor in the port of Classis. Thus, when the gates were opened to admit Belisarius, he brought with him plenty to a famine-stricken people. Then he rode through the streets of the impregnable Queen of the Lagoons, with the Gothic ambassadors by his side, and the all-observing Procopius in his train. Much did the secretary ponder, as he rode, on one of his favourite themes of meditation, that hidden force—he will not call it Providence, and perhaps dare not call it Fate—which loves to baffle the calculations of men, and give the race not to the swift, the battle not to the strong, but to the objects of its own apparently capricious selection. The streets were crowded with tall and martial Goths, far surpassing in number and size the Roman army, and through them marched the little band of Belisarius, under-sized, mean-looking men, but conquerors. The Goths, still confiding in what the new Emperor of the West would do for them, felt not nor admitted the shame; but the quick instinct of the women told them that their husbands were disgraced by such an ending to the war. They spat in the faces of the barbarians, and, pointing to the insignificant-looking men who followed the ensigns of the *Senatus Populus Que Romanus*, 'Are these the

540. Entry into Ravenna.

Musings of Procopius.

Anger of the Gothic women.

[1] Agnellus (Liber Pontificalis, 62) says that Belisarius entered Ravenna 'in mense Martio.' Though his chronology is here wrong in the years, there seems to be something worth attending to in his indication of months and days.

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mighty heroes,' said they, 'with whose deeds you have terrified us? Are these your conquerors? Men can we call you no longer, who have been beaten by champions such as these.'

Belisarius drops the mask.

The exact time when Belisarius dropped the mask and let the barbarians see that he was not their Emperor, but still only the general of Justinian, is not clearly indicated. Probably the process of disillusion was a gradual one. At the moment of his triumphal entry he doubtless allowed himself to be saluted as Caesar, but any thoughts which he may have entertained of keeping his promise to the Goths and actually assuming the purple vanished.

> 'His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful, kept him falsely true.'

The city not plundered.

On one point, however, he did keep the compact to which he had sworn. There was no plunder of the city, and the Goths were allowed to retain all their private property. But the great hoard of the kings, stored up in the palace, all that the wisdom of Theodoric and the insatiate avarice of Theodahad had accumulated, was carried away to Constantinople. Some of it may perchance have remained in the treasure-vaults of the palace of the Eastern Caesars till Baldwin and Dandolo with their Franks and Venetians, the soldiers of the Fourth Crusade, wrenched open the doors of those mysterious chambers, nearly seven centuries after the accession of Justinian.

Treatment of King and nobles.

Witigis himself was treated courteously, but kept for the present in ward, till he could be taken in the conqueror's train to Constantinople. Some of his greatest nobles were selected to accompany him. The

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mass of the Gothic warriors, at least such of them as dwelt south of the Po[1], were told to return to their own lands. The Roman soldiers and the men of Roman extraction thus became actually the majority in the former capital of the Goths.

Fortunes of Ravenna.

In this way did the strong and stately city of Ravenna come again under the sway of a Roman Caesar, the stronghold of whose dominion in Italy it was destined to remain for more than two centuries[2], till Aistolf the Lombard in 752 reft it from Byzantium, to be himself despoiled of it a few years later by Pepin the Frank.

Cities of Venetia.

Most of the other cities of North-eastern Italy which contained Gothic garrisons, Treviso, Cesena[3], and many others, surrendered at once to the Imperial forces on hearing of the fall of Ravenna. Verona and Pavia seem to have been the only cities of any importance still held by the unsubdued Gothic warriors.

Ildibad at Verona.

In Verona the command was vested in a brave chief named Ildibad, nephew of Theudis, King of the Visigoths in Spain. This man refused to transfer his allegiance to the Emperor, though Belisarius, by detaining his children captives in Ravenna, had it in his power to put sore pressure upon him.

Uraias at Pavia.

In Pavia the noble Uraias, nephew of Witigis, still commanded.

When the hope that Belisarius would play an independent part as Emperor of the West faded from the hearts of the Gothic warriors, the bravest of them

[1] Ὅσοι ἐντὸς Πάδου ποταμοῦ ᾤκηντο. Ἐντὸς seems always to mean on this side of the Po, as reckoned from Rome.

[2] Except for a very short occupation by the Lombard King Liutprand. (See vol. vi. p. 482.)

[3] The language of Procopius as to the time of the surrender of Cesena is not quite clear, but the point is an unimportant one.

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Offer of the crown to Uraias.

flocked to Pavia and sought an audience with Uraias. With tears such as valiant men may shed, they thus addressed him: 'Of all the evils which have befallen the nation of the Goths thou, O Uraias! art the chief cause, through thy very worthiness. For that uncle of thine, so cowardly and so unfortunate in war[1], would long ago have been thrust aside by us from the throne, even as we thrust aside Theodoric's own nephew Theodahad, if we had not looked with admiration on thy prowess, and believed that thou wert in truth at the helm of the state, leaving only the name of kingship to thine uncle. Now is our good-nature shown to have been folly, and the very root of all the evils that have come upon us. Hosts of our best and bravest, as thou knowest, O dear Uraias! have fallen on our Italian battle-fields. Our proudest nobles, with Witigis and the Gothic hoard, are being carried off to Constantinople by Belisarius. Thou and we alone remain, a feeble and miserable remnant, and we too shall soon, if we live, share the same fate. But we can die, O Uraias! and it is better for us to die than to be carried captive with our wives and our little ones to the uttermost ends of the earth. Be thou our leader, and we shall do something worthy of our renown before we find a grave in Italy.'

Refusal of Uraias.

Uraias replied, that he too, like them, preferred death to slavery, but that the kingship he would not take, since he would seem to be setting himself up as

[1] Οὕτως ἄνανδρόν τε καὶ ἀτυχῆ ἐξηγούμενον. This passage is one of those which I think justify us in looking upon Witigis as not only a blunderer but a coward, at any rate in the later part of his career. I suspect that the worry of the siege of Rome unnerved him.

BOOK V. CH. 18. 540. Ildibad King.

a rival to his uncle. He strongly advised them to offer it to Ildibad, a man of bravery and might, and one whose relationship to Theudis, the Visigothic King, might at this crisis prove serviceable to their cause. The advice seemed good to the Gothic warriors, who at once repaired to Verona and invested Ildibad with the purple robe of royalty[1]. Though accepting the kingly office, he urged his new subjects not yet to abandon all hope of persuading Belisarius to fulfil his plighted word and ascend the Western throne by their assistance, in which event Ildibad would willingly return into a private station[2]. One more effort accordingly they made to shake the loyalty of their conqueror. All Italy knew that he was under orders to leave Ravenna; to take charge of the Persian war, said some; accused by his brother generals of treasonable designs, said others. There was some truth in both assertions. Justinian needed Belisarius on the banks of the Euphrates, but he also feared him in the palace at Ravenna. The Gothic envoys appeared in the presence of Belisarius: they reproached him for his former breach of faith; they upbraided him as a self-made slave, who did not blush to choose the condition of a lackey of Justinian when he might, in all the dignity of manhood, reign as Emperor of the West over brave and loyal warriors. They besought him even yet to retrace his steps. Ildibad

Last appeal to Belisarius.

[1] Ὧ δὴ τὴν πορφύραν περιβαλόντες. The letter of Cassiodorus (Var. i. 2) shows that this is not a mere rhetorical phrase, but that the Gothic kings were in fact clad in purple.

[2] Ildibad's accession-speech in Procopius (p. 275) is vapid and rhetorical, a strange contrast to the stirring and pathetic words addressed by the Gothic nobles to Uraias. I cannot but entertain the belief that these at least are truly reported.

BOOK V. CH. 18. 540. would bring his new purple and gladly lay it at the feet of the monarch of the Goths and Italians. Reproaches and blandishments were alike in vain. The Roman General refused to strike a single stroke for Empire in the lifetime of Justinian. The Envoys returned to Ildibad. Belisarius, in obedience to his master's orders, quitted Ravenna; and with his departure, which coincided with the end of the fifth year of the war, ended the first act of the Byzantine reconquest of Italy.

May, 540.

Retirement of Cassiodorus from official life.

At this point also we take our final leave of one whose name has been of continual occurrence through many chapters of this history, the late Praetorian Prefect, Cassiodorus. Since the election of King Witigis he had not, apparently, taken any conspicuous part in public affairs[1]. Amid the clash of arms his persuasive voice was silent: and with the two races, Goth and Roman, exasperated against one another by memories of battle, massacre, and the privations of terrible sieges, he recognised but too plainly that the labour of his life was wasted. The united commonwealth of Goths and Romans was a broken bubble, and he might as easily call up Theodoric from the grave as recall even one of the days of that golden age when Theodoric was king.

Something, however, might yet be done to save the precious inheritance of classical antiquity from the waves of barbaric invasion which were now too obviously about to roll over Italy, from Byzantium's mercenaries, the Lombard and the Herul, as well as

[1] For an account of the five letters written by Cassiodorus for Witigis between 536 and 538, see my 'Letters of Cassiodorus,' 49–50, and 444–448.

from the Frankish neighbour who had learned with too fatal aptitude the road across the Alps. This service—and it was the greatest he could have rendered to humanity—Cassiodorus determined to perform while he passed the evening of his life in monastic seclusion in his native Bruttii, at his own beloved Scyllacium.

Approximate date of this event.

It was probably in the year 539 or 540 that the veteran statesman laid aside the insignia of a Praetorian Prefect and assumed the garb of a monk. The chief reason for choosing the earlier year, and for supposing Cassiodorus not to have continued till the bitter end in the service of Witigis, is that had he been present on the memorable day when Belisarius and his men entered Ravenna, he would probably have met and conversed with Procopius. In that case his noble character, and the important part which he had played for a generation in the Ostrogothic monarchy, would surely have impressed themselves on the mind of the historian, and prevented that strange omission which he has made in writing so fully about Theodoric's kingdom and never mentioning the name of Cassiodorus.

His treatise on the Soul.

In any event the late chief minister was close upon the 60th year of his age when he retired to Squillace. His mind during the last few dreary years had been ever more and more turning to the two great solaces of a disappointed man, Literature and Religion. After he had completed the collection of his Various Epistles[1] he had, upon the earnest entreaty of his friends, composed a short treatise on the Nature of the Soul. The philosophy of this treatise is not

[1] About 538 (?).

BOOK V. CH. 18.

new, being chiefly derived from Plato[1]: and the philology, as displayed in some marvellous derivations at the outset of the treatise, if new, is not true[2]. But there are some striking thoughts in this little essay, as, for instance, on the ineffable love which the soul bears to her dwelling-place the body, fearing death for its sake though herself immortal, dreading the body's pain from which she cannot herself receive any injury. But the most interesting passage, coming from so old and astute a statesman as Cassiodorus, is one in which he naïvely attempts to describe the outward signs by which we distinguish evil men from the good.

Characteristics of the wicked.

'The bad man's countenance, whatever be its natural beauty, always has a cloud resting upon it[3]. In the midst of his mirth a deep and secret sadness is always waiting to take possession of him, and appears on his countenance when he deems himself unobserved. His eye wanders hither and thither, and he is ever on the watch to see what others think of him. His conversation is by fits and starts: he takes up one subject after another and leaves his narratives unfinished without apparent cause. He has a look of worry and pre-occupation in his idlest hours, and lives in perpetual fear when none is

[1] Through Claudianus Mamertus, a friend of Sidonius, says Ebert (i. 489).

[2] *Anima* is derived from the Greek ἄναιμα, 'bloodless,' because the soul is not dependent on flesh and blood. *Animus* is from ἄνεμος, 'wind,' because thought is as swift as the wind. *Mens* is from μήνη, 'the moon,' because, though exposed to various changes, the mind eventually returns to its own full-orbed perfection (p. 1282, ed. Migne).

[3] 'Malis nubilus vultus est in qualibet gratia corporali' (p. 1298).

pursuing him. Seeking greedily for all the pleasures of life, he is incurring the penalty of eternal death; and endeavouring to prolong his share of this world's light he is preparing for himself the shades of eternal night.'

Was Cassiodorus when he drew this striking picture describing the way in which the memory of the murdered Amalasuntha tormented the soul of Theodahad?

Characteristics of the good.

'The good man, on the other hand, has a certain calm joyousness in his countenance, earned by many secret tears. His face is pale and thin, but suggests the idea of strength. A long beard gives venerableness to his aspect: he is very clean, without a trace of foppery. His eyes are clear, and brighten naturally when he addresses you. His voice is of moderate tone, not so low as to be akin to silence, nor swoln into the harsh bluster of the bully. His very pace is ordered, neither hurrying nor creeping. He does not watch another's eye to see how it is regarding him, but holds simply straightforward on his way. Even the natural sweetness of his breath distinguishes him from the evil man, who seeks to hide the fumes of wine by the sickening scent of artificial perfumes[1].'

Cassiodorus at Squillace.

The time was now come for Cassiodorus openly to enter that monastic state towards which, as we can perceive from this ideal portraiture of a good man, his own aspirations had for some time been tending. Leaving the lagunes of Ravenna, the pine-wood and

[1] Some of the touches in this ideal portrait suggest, as Ebert has pointed out (i. 489), an approach to the mediaeval painters' manner of representing saintliness.

BOOK V. CH. 18.

the palace of the Ostrogothic kings, where so many of the hours of his middle life had been spent, he returned to his first love, his own ancestral Scyllacium, its hills, its fish-ponds, its wide outlook over the Ionian sea. Here upon his patrimonial domain he founded two monasteries. High up on the hill, and perhaps surrounded by the walls of the older and deserted city[1], was placed the secluded hermitage of Castellum, destined for those who preferred the solitary life of the rigid anchorite to the more social atmosphere of the monastic brotherhood. The latter and more popular type of convent was represented by the monastery of Vivarium, situated by the little river Pellena, and on the edge of the fish-ponds of which Cassiodorus has already given us so picturesque a description[2]. Here the old statesman erected for the monks, who soon flocked round him, a building which, though not luxurious, was better supplied with the comforts of life than was usual with institutions of this kind, at any rate in the first fervour of monasticism. These are the terms in which Cassiodorus himself describes the place, in a treatise dedicated to his monks[3]:—

Hermitage of Castellum.

Monastery of Vivarium.

'The very situation of the Vivarian monastery invites you to exercise hospitality towards travellers and the poor. There you have well-watered gardens and the streams of the river Pellena, abounding in fish, close beside you. A modest and useful stream, not overwhelming you by the multitude of its waters,

The stream.

[1] I speak doubtfully because the topography of Squillace does not seem to have been yet fully elucidated. Lenormant seems to prove that the Roman and the modern city are practically on the same site, but that the Greek city was at some distance.

[2] See vol. iii. p. 317.

[3] De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum, cap. xxix.

but on the other hand never running dry, it is ever at your call when needed for the supply of your gardens. Here, by God's help, we have made in the mountain caverns safe receptacles for the fish which you may catch from the stream. In these they can swim about and feed and disport themselves, and never know that they are captives, till the time comes when you require them for your food. We have also ordered baths to be built, suitably prepared for those who are in feeble health; and into these flows the fair transparent stream, good alike for washing and for drinking. We hope therefore that your monastery will be sought by strangers rather than that you will need to go elsewhere to seek delight in strange places. But all these things, as you know, pertain to the joys of the present life, and have nought to do with the hope of the future which belongs to the faithful. Thus placed here, let us transfer our desires to those things which shall cause us to reign there with Christ.'

The fish-ponds.

The baths.

Again, after describing in attractive terms the happy labours of the *antiquarii* in the copying-room of the monastery, he goes on to speak of the permitted luxury of comely book-binding, and of his mechanical contrivances for promoting the regular employment of the monastic day. 'To these we have also added workmen skilled in covering the codices, in order that the glory of the sacred books may be decked with robes of fitting beauty. Herein we do in some sort imitate that householder in our Lord's parable who, when he had asked the guests to his supper, desired that they should be clothed in wedding garments. By these workmen we have caused several kinds of

Book-binding.

BOOK V. CH. 18.

binding to be all represented in one codex[1], in order that the man of taste may choose that form of covering which pleases him best. We have also prepared for your nocturnal studies mechanical lamps, self-trimming and self-supplied with oil, so that they burn brightly without any human assistance. And in order that the division of the hours of the day, so advantageous to the human race, may not pass unobserved by you, I have caused one measurer of time to be constructed in which the indication is made by the sun's rays, and another, worked by water, which night and day marks regularly the passage of the hours. This is also of use in cloudy days, when the inherent force of water accomplishes what the fiery energy of the sun fails to perform. Thus do we make the two most opposite elements, fire and water, concur harmoniously for the same purpose.'

Mechanical lamps.

Sun-dial.

Water-clock.

The monastery to be a theological school.

From these few passages it will be seen what was the spirit in which Cassiodorus founded his monastery of Vivarium. Religion and learning were to be the two poles upon which the daily life of the community revolved. He himself tells us[2] that he had earnestly striven to persuade Pope Agapetus to found a great theological school at Rome, like those which were then flourishing at Alexandria and Nisibis[3]. The wars and tumults which had recently

[1] 'Quibus multiplices species facturarum in uno codice depictas (ni fallor) decenter expressimus' (De Inst. Div. Litterarum, cap. xxx). Apparently the different bindings were all represented by facsimiles in this one codex.

[2] In the Preface to the Institutio Divinarum Litterarum.

[3] 'Sicut apud Alexandriam multo tempore fuisse traditur institutum, nunc etiam in Nisibi Civitate *ab Hebraeis* sedulo fertur exponi.' This hint about a recently established Rabbinical

afflicted the kingdom of Italy made the fulfilment of this design impossible; and Cassiodorus thereupon resolved that his own retirement from the field of political life should be the commencement of a vigorous and sustained effort to stem the tide of ignorance and barbarism which was flowing over Italy. Hitherto the monk retiring from the world had been too much inclined to think only of the salvation of his own individual soul. Long hours of mystic musing had filled up the day of the Egyptian anchorite. Augustine and Cassian, men so widely divergent in their theological teaching, had each contributed something towards the introduction of healthy work into the routine of the monastic life; and Benedict, with whose life and career we shall soon have to concern ourselves in greater detail, had wisely ordained in his rule that a considerable part of the day should be devoted to actual toil. Still, all this had reference only to manual labour. It was the glory of Cassiodorus that he, first and pre-eminently, insisted on the expediency of including intellectual labour in the sphere of monastic duties[1]. Some monks, he freely admitted, would never be at home in the cloister library, and might better devote their energies to the cloister

Cassiodorus makes the monastery a place of intellectual labour.

school at Nisibis (within the limits of the Persian empire) is of great interest, especially in connection with the origin of Mohammedanism.

[1] This is well brought out by Franz (M. A. Cass. Senator, p. 42): 'Das Verdienst, zuerst die Pflege der Wissenschaften in den Bereich der Aufgaben des klösterlichen Lebens aufgenommen zu haben, kann man mit vollem Rechte für Cassiodorius in Anspruch nehmen.' Franz has drawn up an interesting imaginary catalogue of the Library at Vivarium from the hints furnished by the works of Cassiodorus.

garden. But there were others who only needed training to make them apt scholars in divine and human learning, and this training he set himself to give them. This thought—may we not say this divinely suggested thought?—in the mind of Cassiodorus was one of infinite importance to the human race. Here, on the one hand, were the vast armies of monks, whom both the unsettled state of the times and the religious ideas of the age were driving irresistibly into the cloister; and who, when immured there with only theology to occupy their minds, became, as the great cities of the East knew too well, preachers of discord and mad fanaticism. Here, on the other hand, were the accumulated stores of two thousand years of literature, sacred and profane, the writings of Hebrew prophets, Greek philosophers, Latin rhetoricians, perishing for want of men at leisure to transcribe them. The luxurious Roman noble with his slave-amanuenses multiplying copies of his favourite authors for his own and his friends' libraries, was an almost extinct existence. With every movement of barbarian troops over Italy, whether those barbarians called themselves the men of Witigis or of Justinian, some towns were being sacked, some precious manuscripts were perishing from the world. Cassiodorus perceived that the boundless, the often wearisome leisure of the convent might be profitably spent in arresting this work of denudation, in preserving for future ages the intellectual treasure which must otherwise have inevitably perished. That this was one of the great services rendered by monasticism to the human race, the most superficial student of history has learned: but not all who have learned

it know that the monk's first decided impulse in this direction was derived from Theodoric's minister Cassiodorus.

Cassiodorus not Abbot.

The veteran statesman seems to have wisely abstained from making himself actual Abbot of either of his two monasteries. To have done so would have plunged him into a sea of petty administrative details and prevented him from thinking out his schemes for the instruction of the men who had gathered round him[1].

Writings of Cassiodorus in his old age.

Cassiodorus (as has been said) was probably about sixty years of age when he retired from Ravenna and when this 'Indian summer' of his life, so beautiful and so full of fruit for humanity, began. His own writings after this time were copious, and though they have long since ceased to have any scientific value, they are interesting as showing the many-sided, encyclopaediac character of the attainments of him who had been all his life a busy official. A voluminous commentary on the Psalms was the work on which he probably prided himself the most, and which is now the most absolutely useless. In the so-called 'Historia Tripartita,' he and his friend Epiphanius wove together, somewhat clumsily, into a single narrative the three

Commentary on the Psalms.

Historia Tripartita.

[1] In the De Institutione (cap. xxxii) he addresses the abbots Chalcedonius and Geruntius, apparently the heads of the two convents of Castellum and Vivarium. The description which is often appended to the name of Cassiodorus, 'Abbot of Viviers,' is doubly incorrect. He was not an abbot; and there is no conceivable reason for giving the French form of the name of his favourite monastery. Probably the second mistake has arisen from the fact that Ste. Marthe's Life of Cassiodorus, written in French near the end of the seventeenth century, was the book by which, a hundred years ago, he was best known to the world.

BOOK V. CH. 18.

Complexiones.

histories of Church affairs from the Conversion of Constantine to the days of Theodosius II. given by Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret. In the 'Complexiones' he comments upon the Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse: and here it may be remarked in passing, that he includes the Epistle to the Hebrews among the writings of the Apostle Paul, apparently without a suspicion that this had not always been the received view in the Roman Church.

De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum.

In his book 'De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum,' from which some quotations have already been made, he gives his monks some valuable hints how to study and how to transcribe the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers. Some precepts for the regulation of their daily life are also included herein, and upon the whole the book seems to approach nearer to the character of the Rule of Cassiodorus[1] than any other that he has composed.

De Artibus ac Disciplinis liberalium Litterarum

In the 'De Artibus ac Disciplinis liberalium Litterarum' he treats of the seven liberal arts, which are Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy. It is characteristic of the writer that Rhetoric and Dialectic, the two great weapons in the armoury of a Roman official, are treated of at considerable length, while of the other five arts only the slenderest outline is furnished.

De Orthographia (written about 573).

Lastly, when the veteran statesman had already reached the ninety-third year of his age, he composed for his faithful monks a somewhat lengthy treatise on

[1] Why do we not say 'Regula *Sancti* Cassiodori'? It is a mystery why so excellent a man, of orthodox creed and one of the founders of the monastic system, should not have been deemed worthy of canonisation.

Orthography. They said to him, 'What does it profit us to know what the ancients wrote or what your sagacity has added thereto, if we are entirely ignorant how we ought to write these things, and through want of acquaintance with spelling cannot accurately reproduce what we read in our own speech?' He accordingly collected for their benefit the precepts of ten grammarians, ending with his contemporary Priscian[1], as to the art of orthography. One of the greatest difficulties even of fairly educated Romans at that day seems to have been to distinguish in writing between the two letters b and v, which were alike in sound. This difficulty, which is abundantly illustrated by the errors in inscriptions in the Imperial age, is strenuously grappled with by Cassiodorus, or rather by the authors from whom he quotes, and who give long and elaborate rules to prevent the student from spelling *libero* with a v, or *navigo* with a b.

End of his life.

Amid these literary labours, in the holy seclusion of Squillace, we may suppose Cassiodorus to have died, having nearly completed a century of life. Even in 573, when he wrote his treatise on Orthography, he had already long overpassed the limit of time prescribed for the present volume. It was then twenty years after the final overthrow of the Ostrogothic monarchy. The Lombards had been in Italy five years. Narses was dead, Albion was dead, Justinian's successor had been for eight years upon the throne. Yet still the brave and patient old man, who had once been the chief minister of a mighty realm, toiled on at his self-imposed task. The folly of his countrymen, the hope-

[1] 'Ex Prisciano grammatico, qui nostro tempore Constantinopoli doctor fuit . . . . ista collecta sunt' (cf. vol. iii. pp. 401–2).

lessly adverse current of events, had prevented him from building up the kingdom of Italy: they could not prevent him from conferring a priceless gift on mankind by rescuing the literature of Rome from the barbarians for the benefit of those barbarians' progeny.



CHAPTER XIV.

AFFAIRS AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

Authorities.

Sources:—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 1; De Bello Persico, i. 24–25; Anecdota (Hist. Arcana), 1–3.

JOANNES LYDUS, De Magistratibus, iii. 57–69.

540.

Fall of Antioch.

THE year 540 was a memorable one for the monarchy of Justinian, both by its disasters and its triumphs. In June of that year, not many weeks after the fall of Ravenna, the troops of Chosroës entered Antioch. Heavily had the citizens of that fair and luxurious city, for near three centuries the inviolate capital of Syria, the place where 'the disciples were first called Christians,' to pay for the taunts and gibes which, confiding in the strength of their walls, they had levelled at the haughty King of the fire-worshippers. Men, women, and children were mixed in one promiscuous carnage; long and stately streets were turned into smoking ruins; the sad remnant of the population which had laughed at Julian and rebelled against Theodosius was carried away into captivity beyond the Euphrates, beyond the Tigris, and there in the new city of Chosroantiocheia pined in vain for the groves of Daphne and the streams of Orontes, themselves the living monuments of their tyrant's triumph.

BOOK V. CH. 14.

540. Arrival of Belisarius at Constantinople.

But, also in the same year, and very shortly after these terrible tidings reached Constantinople, the ships bearing Belisarius with his captives and the Gothic hoard cast anchor in the Golden Horn. There was no regular triumph, as there had been when the Vandal King was led through the streets of the City. The jealous timidity of the Emperor was aroused, and he feared to grant the soldiers and the populace so tempting an opportunity for shouting '*Belisarie* Imperator tu Vincas,' and placing the brilliant General on the throne of the studious and secluded monarch.

The Gothic captives in Constantinople.

But though the formal pageant was withheld, none the less must the day when the successor of Theodoric prostrated himself in the purple presence-chamber of the Caesars have been felt as a real triumph for Belisarius. Then might the Byzantines see Witigis and his wife, the grand-daughter of the great Amal, followed by a long train of Gothic warriors whose stately frames and noble countenances filled even the exacting Justinian with admiration. With them came the children of the gallant Ildibad, unwilling hostages on behalf of the newly-crowned King. The vessels of gold and silver, and all the ponderous magificence of the great Gothic hoard, were exhibited to the wondering Senators, though not to the multitudes outside the palace. Then Witigis having made his prostration was raised by the Emperor and received the title of Patrician. After he had spent two years at the capital, honoured by the friendship of the Emperor[1],

[1] 'Perductum Vitiges [lege Vitigem] Constantinopolim patricii honore donavit: ubi plus biennio demoratus imperatorisque in affectu conjunctus, rebus excessit humanis' (Jordanes, De Reb. Get. lx).

the old Gothic King died. A man apparently who in his younger and hungrier days had done the State some service; but when his countrymen gave him a palace and a crown and a royal bride as rewards for the deliverance which they expected at his hands, he replied, by his acts or rather by his utter absence of acts, in the words of Horace's wealthy soldier,

BOOK V. CH. 14.

Death of Witigis.

542.

'Let him fight battles who has lost his all[1].'

His young wife, Matasuentha, soon after his death married Germanus, at that time the favourite nephew of Justinian. What mattered to her the ruin of her people and the downfall of the edifice erected by the wise patience of her illustrious grandfather? She had seen Constantinople, that Paradise of all degenerate Teutons, she had been able to copy the dresses of the crowned circus-dancer Theodora, she was even admitted into the family of the Dardanian peasants who swayed the destinies of the Empire.

Second marriage of Matasuentha.

As for Belisarius himself, the man who had brought two kings to the footstool of Justinian; who had subdued the two races of most terrible renown in the wars of the preceding century, the Goths and the Vandals; who had again, as it seemed, united to the Empire its severed Western portion,—his name and fame were in the mouths of all men. Though the well-earned triumph had been denied him, every day that he showed himself in the streets of Constantinople was in fact a triumph. It was a pleasure of

Reception of Belisarius by the people.

[1] '"I, bone, quo virtus tua te vocat, i pede fausto,
Grandia laturus meritorum praemia. Quid stas?"
Post haec ille catus quantumvis rusticus, "Ibit,
Ibit eo, quo vis, qui zonam perdidit," inquit.'
(Horace, Epist. ii. 2. 37–40.)

which the Byzantines never tired, to see him ride through the city from his palace to the Agora. Before him went troops of tall Vandals and Goths, of swarthy Moors the wiry sons of the desert. All had at one time or another felt his conquering sword, yet all delighted to sound his praises. Behind him rode some of his own domestic body-guard, itself a little army of 7000 men when all were mustered; each horse a stately charger, each man nobly born and of noble aspect, and one who had done great deeds fighting in the foremost ranks with the enemy. In the course of this history we have heard continually of the exploits performed by this 'spear-man[1]' or that 'shield-bearer[2]' of Belisarius. No wonder that the astonished Senators of Rome had said, 'One household alone has destroyed the kingdom of Theodoric,' when they marked the great part played by the body-guard of the General, in the world-famous defence of Rome[3].

His body-guard.

Appearance and character of Belisarius.

The central figure of this brilliant cavalcade, Belisarius himself, was of mighty stature, with well-proportioned limbs and a countenance of manly beauty. Though, as we have seen, he had not the power of attaching to himself the loyal devotion of his officers of highest rank, his affability with the multitude, his tender care over the common soldier, even his desire to mitigate the horrors of war for the peasants of the invaded lands, were the theme of universal praise. He visited his wounded soldiers, doing all that money could do to assuage their sufferings. The successful

[1] δορυφόρος. [2] ὑπασπιστής.

[3] Ῥωμαίων τε οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, ἡνίκα πρὸς Γότθων πολιορκούμενοι τὰ ποιούμενα ἐν ταῖς τοῦ πολέμου ξυμβολαῖς ἔβλεπον, ἐν θαύματι μεγάλῳ ποιούμενοι ἀνεφθέγγοντο ὡς οἰκία μία τὴν Θευδερίχου δύναμιν καταλύει (De Bello Gotthico, iii. 1; p. 283).

champions received from his own hand armlets of costly metal, or chains of gold or silver. If a brave but needy warrior had lost his horse or his bow in the combat, it was from the private stores of the General that the loss was supplied. No soldier, where Belisarius commanded, was permitted to straggle from the high road and tread down the growing crops of grass or of corn. Even the fruit hanging ripe from the trees was safe from depredation when he marched past with his men. All provisions were paid for on a liberal scale, and thus, like our own Wellington on his march from the Pyrenees to Paris, he made even the greed of the peasant the most effectual helper of his commissariat.

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His military qualities.

His military character, as it had thus far revealed itself, has been sufficiently indicated by his deeds. Its one distinguishing quality was *resourcefulness.* Nothing seemed to daunt or perplex him; and whatever move his antagonist might make, he was always ready with the reply. He was bold to the very verge of rashness, when only by audacity could the game be won; but when time was on his side, he could delay like Fabius himself. Strong, and even terrible, when sternness was required, yet with a disposition naturally sympathetic, temperate at the banquet, for 'no man ever saw Belisarius intoxicated,' chaste in morals and faithful to his wedded wife through all the licence of a camp, he anticipates, in some features of his character, the ideals of knight errantry and Christian soldiership, the Sir Galahad and the Bayard of chivalry, the Gustavus and the Havelock of the modern age.

The worm at the root.

Such was Belisarius in the midsummer of his greatness and renown, at the thirty-sixth year of his age, a

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year younger than Napoleon at Austerlitz, four years older than Hannibal at Cannae[1]. Unfortunately, the happiness of his lot was only in outward seeming. Even while he strode through the Agora of Constantinople, followed by the yellow-haired giants from Carthage or Ravenna, his heart was brooding sadly over the thought that the wife whom he loved with such passionate devotion no longer cared for him, and that all her affection seemed to be reserved for a shaven monk at Ephesus.

Infidelities of Antonina.

The whole story of the infidelities of Antonina, told with a cruel zest in the Anecdota of Procopius, need not be repeated here. The backstairs-gossip of

Comparative ages of great generals.

[1] On casting the horoscope, retrospectively, of eight of the greatest generals of ancient and modern times (Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Belisarius, Marlborough, Frederick, Napoleon, and Wellington), I find most accordance between those of *Hannibal, Belisarius, and Napoleon.* All of these three men did their greatest deeds before they were forty, or, to define the age more closely, between twenty-five and thirty-seven. After the latter age all three seem to lose their vigour, or at any rate their luck. Zama in the forty-seventh year of Hannibal is an exact pendant to Waterloo in the forty-seventh year of Napoleon, and corresponds generally with the least successful part of Belisarius's second command in Italy. Belisarius and *Marlborough,* whose domestic and political histories resemble one another so closely, differ strangely in this respect. Belisarius is one of the youngest of conquerors; Marlborough is quite the oldest upon our list, Blenheim and all his great battles having been won after his fifty-fourth year, when Belisarius was virtually superannuated. *Wellington* and *Caesar* won most of their victories between forty and fifty, and their careers show in many respects considerable correspondence. The two born kings, *Alexander* and *Frederick,* have of course exceptional opportunities of early distinguishing themselves: but while Alexander wins all his great battles before he is thirty and dies at thirty-two, the really heroic part of Frederick's life, the Seven Years' War, does not begin till he is between the ages of forty-four and fifty-one.

a palace does not become worthy material for history, because it happens to relate to the wrongs of a warrior and a statesman. It is enough to say that the wife of Belisarius, though she had already reached or passed middle life[1], unmindful of her conjugal duty was passionately in love with her handsome chamberlain Theodosius, the godson and adopted child of herself and her husband. At Carthage and at Syracuse Belisarius saw and heard enough to rouse his suspicions: but he put the terrible thought away from him, and even consented, as we have seen, to put to death (ostensibly for another offence) the officer, Constantine, who had expressed an opinion unfavourable to the honour of Antonina. So the years had gone by, Theodosius holding a place of honour and trust in the General's palace, passionately loved by its mistress, and Belisarius the only person therein who was ignorant of his dishonour. When the whole party returned to the capital, Theodosius felt that the risk which he was running was too terrible, and retired to Ephesus, where he entered a convent. Antonina made no attempt to conceal her wild grief at his departure, and actually persuaded Belisarius to join her in entreating the Emperor to command his return.

Intrigue with Theodosius.

At length, in the spring of 541, all his preparations being completed, Belisarius started for the East to try conclusions with Chosroës. On the eve of his departure, Photius, son of Antonina, driven to despair by the machinations of his unnatural mother against

541. Departure of Belisarius for the East.

Photius convinces him of Antonina's guilt.

[1] Certainly past fifty. She had a grown-up son and daughter in 535, and Procopius informs us that she was sixty years old in 544, when Belisarius started the second time for Italy. But in his spite he may have added a few years to her age.

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his life, laid before the General convincing proof of her past unfaithfulness. He proved to him also that Theodosius, who had refused to leave his convent in obedience to the Emperor's orders, was in reality only waiting for the moment of Belisarius's departure to return to Constantinople and resume the interrupted intrigue. Now at length the emotion of jealousy, so long kept at bay, took full possession of the General's soul. He made Photius his confederate, and devised with him a scheme for separating the guilty lovers and imprisoning Theodosius. Then he started for the field; but with a mind distracted by these bitter thoughts, and hampered by the necessity of keeping open his communications with his step-son, he failed to achieve any brilliant success over Chosroës. The plan, however, devised between him and Photius was at first successfully executed. Antonina was kept in harsh durance, and her lover was carried off to a fortress in Cilicia, the very name of which was known only to Photius. So far the avengers of the injured honour of the husband had succeeded; but now Theodora appeared upon the scene, her aid being invoked by the guilty but furious wife; and whenever Theodora condescended to intervene, all laws human and divine must give way before her. To understand the Empress's motives for interfering, obviously on the wrong side, in this wretched matrimonial dispute, we must turn to the political history of the times and take note of another event which signalised this year 541, the fall of John of Cappadocia.

Antonina imprisoned and Theodosius banished.

Interference of Theodora.

532. It will be remembered that in the terrible insurrection of the NIKA, the fury of the populace had been especially directed against two ministers of the

Emperor, Tribonian the quaestor, and John of Cappadocia the Praetorian Prefect. Both had bowed before the storm, but both, soon after the suppression of the revolt, had been restored to their old offices. Tribonian had probably learned the lesson that the ministers of a king must at least seem to do justice. At any rate, his courteous demeanour, his honeyed words, and the vast learning of which he was undoubtedly master, caused the people to acquiesce patiently in his subsequent tenure of office, and he died, a few years after the time which we have now reached, at peace with all men.

Justinian's unpopular ministers. Tribonian.

545.

Far different was the career of his early partner in unpopularity, the coarse-fibred, ignorant, but singularly able John of Cappadocia. For eight years this remorseless tyrant was the ruling spirit in the internal administration of the Empire. When it came to a question of foreign policy, such as the Vandal expedition, which he would fain have dissuaded Justinian from undertaking, he might be, and was outvoted: but when a new tax had to be levied, or a provincial governor too chary of the fortunes of his subjects to be reprimanded, the voice of John was supreme. He had essentially the slave-driver's nature, the harsh bullying voice, the strong clear brain, the relentless heart, which enable a man in authority to get the maximum of work out of those below him, if they have no choice but to obey. Such a man with the powers of a Grand Vizier was invaluable to Justinian, whose expensive and showy policy required that a great number of harsh and even cruel deeds should be done, though personally his not unkind disposition and his studious nature would have shrunk from the doing of them.

John of Cappadocia.

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His cruelty.

Of any such scruples the hard heart of the Cappadocian felt not a trace. As pitiless as he was quick-witted, a man who lived for the gratification of his lusts, and who believed in nothing else, except in a sorcerer's spells, John was both cruel himself and the cause of cruelty in others. He erected the stocks and the rack in a secret chamber of the Prefect's palace, and there tortured those whom he suspected of concealing their wealth from him, till they had given up the uttermost farthing. One old man, Antiochus by name, was found when he was loosed from the ropes[1] to have died under the severity of the torture. What the Prefect was doing himself in the capital, his minions, emulous of his cruelty, were doing in all the provinces of the East. One in particular, also named John, and surnamed Baggy-cheek[2] from the fat and flabby cheeks which made his face hideous, laid waste the province of Lydia and the city of Philadelphia with his cruel exactions.

Joannes Maxillo-plumacius.

Story of Petronius.

A certain Petronius possessed a valuable jewel which had been handed down to him by his ancestors. Of this jewel the Governor was determined to obtain possession; whether for the Emperor's treasury or his own, who shall say? The owner was put in irons; was beaten with rods by stalwart barbarians; still he refused to part with the inheritance of his fathers. He was shut up in a mule-stable and compelled to spend his days and nights in that filthy dwelling. All his fellow-citizens bewailed, but none were able to

[1] Joannes Lydus, on whose authority these particulars are given (p. 251), declares that he was an eye-witness of this murder.

[2] μαξιλλοπλουμάκιος.

help him. The Bishop of Philadelphia, timidly venturing on some words of remonstrance, backed by an appeal to the sacred writings, was assailed by such a torrent of abuse, for himself, for his office, for the holy books, as might only have been rivalled in the lowest stews of Constantinople. The Bishop wept, but Petronius, seeing that he had fallen into the hands of a monster who feared neither God nor man, sent to his house for the jewel, handed it to the tax-collector, and was permitted to depart, after he had given several pieces of gold to his tormentors as a fee[1] for their labours in chastising him.

Story of Proclus.

Sadder yet was the history of Proclus, a retired veteran, whom the tyrant assailed with a demand for twenty *aurei* (£12), which the unfortunate soldier did not possess. The exactors thought that he merely feigned poverty, and blunted all their instruments of torture on his miserable frame[2]. Wearied out at length he said, 'Very well, then, come home with me and I will give you the twenty *aurei*.' On the road he asked leave to tarry for a few minutes at a wayside inn. His oppressers waited outside, but as he was long in returning, they broke into the chamber and found the poor wretch hanging by a cord from a hook. Indignant at being thus outwitted by a man who had dared to die instead of satisfying the tax-gatherer, they cast his body into the Agora to be trodden under foot of men, and appropriated to the Imperial treasury the slender fortune which might

[1] *Sportula*, the French *douceur*. Literary English seems to have no word which exactly expresses the idea.

[2] Πάντα τὰ τῶν ποινῶν ὄργανα ἀπήμβλυνε τοῖς νεύροις τοῦ ἀθλίου πένητος.

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otherwise have sufficed, and not more than sufficed, for the costs of his burial.

The collector of the public revenue is always and everywhere spoken against, and we generally read the stories of his wrongdoing with some abatement for probable exaggeration. But in this case the most grievous tales of oppression come to us, not from the oppressed provincials, but from a leading member of the Civil Service, from the Somerset House (so to speak) of Constantinople; and the remarkable but unconcerted agreement between Joannes Lydus and Procopius gives great additional value to the testimony of each.

Domestic life of the Cappadocian.

The daily life of the master-extortioner John of Cappadocia is painted by these writers in vivid colours, too vivid indeed and too horrible to be reproduced here. The official palace in which he abode had been built by one of his most virtuous predecessors, Constantine, some seventy years previously, in the reign of Leo, and was then a modest well-proportioned dwelling, such as suited the chief minister of a well-ordered state. It was adorned—and here we get an interesting glimpse of the arts of the Fifth Century—by a picture in mosaic representing the installation of its founder. A later Prefect, Sergius, had added a large upper story, which somewhat spoilt the proportions of the building, and in these upper rooms John of Cappadocia spent his nights and days, wallowing in all kinds of brutal and sensual indulgences[1]. Sea and land were ran-

[1] One of the accusations brought by Lydus against his enemy is that he turned the bath on the ground-floor, which had been good enough for his predecessors, into a stable, and erected

sacked to supply the materials for his gluttony, and while he reclined at the banquet, with his head covered with a veil to look like a king upon the stage, and while troops of the most degraded of mankind of both sexes shared his orgies, the grave and reverend members of his staff, men who had enrolled themselves in the *officium* of the Prefect, believing that they were entering a learned and honourable profession, were compelled to wait upon him at table, like the basest of menials, doing his bidding and that of the shameless crew by whom he was surrounded. If any one dared to thwart the will of the tyrant in this or any other matter, he was handed over to the rough chastisement of John's barbarian men-at-arms, 'men with wolfish souls and wolfish names[1].'

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His gluttony.

So passed the Cappadocian's evening, in flagitious and obscene orgies prolonged far into the night[2]. When his troop of parasites had left him and he had to seek his bed-chamber, then the timidity of the bully showed itself. He knew that he had many enemies (one especially, mightiest and most unscrupulous of them all), and in spite of his thousands of body-guards he could never shake off the haunting fear that he should wake up to see some barbarian's eyes gleaming at him from under shaggy eye-brows and the knife raised to strike him to the

His cowardice.

another bath in the top story, 'forcing the element of water to flow up to an enormous height.' One would like to know what were the means employed for this purpose by the hydraulic engineers of Constantinople.

[1] Τοῖς θηριωδεστάτοις τῶν οἰκετῶν, βαρβάροις καὶ λύκοις ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἅμα καὶ ταῖς προσηγορίαις πρὸς τιμωρίαν ἐκτιθέμενος (Joann. Lydus, ii. 21).

[2] Procop. De Bello Persico, i. 24.

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heart. He started up at intervals to peep out from under the eaves of his dwelling, looking this way and that way at every avenue leading to the palace. Thus with fitful and broken slumbers the night wore away[1]. But when morning came, the fears, the half-formed resolutions of amendment made in the night, had all vanished. He perhaps bethought him that it was well to cultivate his popularity with the mob; for this man, whose hand was so heavy on wealthy senators and Christian bishops, had a certain following among the lowest of the populace, particularly among the Green faction and the brawny Cappadocian porters, his countrymen. Accordingly, dressed in a robe of vivid green, which made more conspicuous the paleness of his sodden face, he would rush through the Agora courting the salutations and the applause of the multitude. Then back to the palace to spend the morning in schemes for amassing money by extortion, the evening in devices for squandering it on bodily delights: and so day was added to day in the life of the Praetorian Prefect of the East.

His popularity-hunting.

His ambitious schemes.

The man, though enslaved to bestial pleasures, had yet some stirrings of ambition, and probably some intellectual qualities which made him fit to rule: and he had a fixed persuasion that he would one day be chosen Emperor. It was a natural thing for a Praetorian Prefect, already so near the summit of the State,—

> 'Lifted up so high,
> To scorn subjection, and think one step higher
> Would set him highest.'

[1] Procop. De Bello Persico, i. 25.

He wore already a cloak[1] dyed in the purple of Cos, but differing from the Emperor's in that it reached only to the knees, while the Emperor's swept the ground; and the gold lace with which the Prefect's was trimmed was of a different and less conspicuous shape[2]. When the Praetorian Prefect entered the room in the palace where the Senate was assembled, the chief officers of the army rose from their seats and fell prostrate before him. The etiquette was for him to raise them and assure them by a kiss, of his good-will to the military power. A minister thus highly distinguished might, as has been said, think the last step an easy one, and yet practically we do not find in the history of the Empire that it was often made[3]. Officers of the guard and ministers of the household were hailed Imperator more often than Prefects of the Praetorium.

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Power and dignity of the Praetorian Prefect.

In the case of John of Cappadocia the coming elevation was not a matter of political calculation but of superstitious belief. Though he feared not God nor regarded man, he had great faith in the power of sorcerers and soothsayers; and the prediction with which these men flattered him, 'Thou shalt be wrapped in the mantle of Augustus,' sank deep into his heart. Often might he be seen kneeling the whole night through on the pavement of a Christian church, dressed in the short cloak of a priest of

John's faith in diviners.

[1] *Mandye.*

[2] Lydus says that the robe of the Praetorian Prefect had ταυλιαὶ (?) instead of *segmenta* (broad stripes) of gold, and that the latter might be worn only by the Emperor ii. 13).

[3] Philip, afterwards Emperor, was Praetorian Prefect under Decius. I cannot at present recall another instance of the same kind.

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Jupiter, and not engaged, so men said, in Christian devotions, but muttering some Pagan prayer or spell, which, as he hoped, would save his life from the assassin's dagger, and make the mind of the Emperor yet more pliable in his hands than it was already.

Theodora's dislike to him.

But it was the Emperor only, not his more quick-witted wife, whose mind submitted to the ascendancy of the Cappadocian. Utterly insensible as Theodora was to the distinction between right and wrong, her artistic Greek nature felt keenly the difference between the beautiful and the uncomely; and the coarse, clumsy profligacy of the Prefect filled her with disgust. He courted the favour of the Green faction to whom she had vowed a life-long enmity. She read doubtless his designs on the Imperial succession, and knew that, if they prospered, the days of Justinian's widow would be numbered. Thus it came to pass that, early in the career of John of Cappadocia, Theodora was his declared foe. At the time of the sedition of the NIKA she had counselled his disgrace, and we may fairly conclude that his second tenure of office, though it lasted eight years, was one long struggle for power between the Emperor's minister and his consort. There is one notable instance, that of Richelieu, in which such a struggle has terminated in the minister's favour; but generally speaking, however indispensable the counsellor may seem, the final victory rests with the wife.

John's jealousy of Belisarius.

When Belisarius returned from the Gothic war, his popularity and his renown were wormwood to the jealous Prefect, who laid many an unsuccessful snare for his rival. Belisarius started for his Eastern campaign; but his wife, a far more dangerous foe,

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541. Antonina plots his ruin.

remained behind. Antonina, who had set her heart on obtaining the favour of Theodora, and knew that John's destruction would be the surest means to that end, devised a scheme for his ruin, so dishonourable that even the brutal Prefect wins a moment's sympathy when we see him thus ensnared. The one amiable feature in his character was his fondness for his only child Euphemia, a young and modest girl, who must assuredly have been brought up out of sight and hearing of her father's orgies. With this child Antonina cultivated an apparent friendship, and, after many visits had established seeming intimacy, she one day burst out into angry complaints of the way in which the Empire was now governed. 'See what an ungrateful master Justinian has been to Belisarius. After extending the bounds of the Roman Empire further than it had ever reached before, and bringing two kings with all their treasures captive to Constantinople, what thanks has my husband received?' Other words were added to the same effect. Euphemia, who, young as she was, shared her father's enmity to Theodora, delighted at this prelude, replied, 'Dear lady, the fault is surely yours and your husband's. You could make an end of all this, but will not, and seem to be satisfied with things as they are.' 'We are powerless,' said Antonina, 'by ourselves. Our strength lies only in the camp, and unless some one in the cabinet seconds our efforts, we can do nothing; but if your father would help us, by God's blessing we might perhaps accomplish something worth telling of.'

Conversation with John's daughter Euphemia.

All this conversation was duly reported to John of Cappadocia, who, thinking that now at last the

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An interview arranged between John and Antonina.

words of the soothsayers were coming true and that by the arms of Belisarius he was to be seated on the throne of the Caesar's, fell headlong into the trap prepared for him and pressed for an immediate interview with Antonina, at which they might arrange their plans and exchange oaths of secrecy and fidelity. Apparently in order to gain time to communicate with Theodora, Antonina replied that an interview in the capital would be inexpedient and dangerous, but that on her approaching departure to join her husband at the camp, John could safely pay her a valedictory visit at the suburb which marked the first stage of her journey. The deceived Prefect willingly accepted the invitation. And yet the very scene of their meeting might have suggested thoughts of prudence. It was a country house of Belisarius, but it was named Rufinianum, having no doubt once
395. belonged to the aspiring Prefect of Arcadius, who mounted the platform to be saluted as Emperor, and descended from it a mutilated and dishonoured corpse[1].

The interview.

All these arrangements were duly communicated to Theodora, and by her to the Emperor[2]. Narses the Eunuch and Marcellus Captain of the Household Troops[3] were sent with a considerable number of troops to listen, and if they heard treasonable words to arrest the traitor. Antonina arrived at the country house where she was to pass the night,

[1] See vol. i. p. 659 for the death of Rufinus.

[2] Procopius in the Anecdota affirms that Antonina bound herself 'by oaths than which the Christians knew none more terrible' not to betray the Cappadocian.

[3] Ἄρχων τῶν ἐν παλατίῳ φυλάκων. Probably he was (Illustris) Magister Militum Praesentalis.

541.

and whence she was to start on the morrow. John of Cappadocia came there too, having, so it was said, received and disregarded a message from Justinian—'Have no secret interview with Antonina.' At midnight they met, the deceived and the deceiver, apparently in the garden of the palace. Behind a low fence crouched Narses and Marcellus with some of their followers. The Cappadocian began open-mouthed about the plot, binding himself and seeking to bind Antonina by the most terrible oaths to secrecy. When they had heard enough, the spies arose and came towards John to arrest him. He uttered a cry: his own guards rushed to the spot, and a struggle followed in which Marcellus was wounded, but not mortally, by a soldier ignorant of his rank. In the scuffle John escaped. Men thought that even then, if he had gone straight to Justinian and appealed to the Imperial clemency, he might still have retained his office; but by fleeing to a church for refuge he left the field free to Theodora, who made his ruin sure. Having been seized in the church, he was degraded from his dignity of Prefect and taken to the city of Cyzicus, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmora, where he was forced to assume the priestly office, changing his name from John to Peter. It was noted by those who were present at the sacred ceremony, that a priestly robe not having been specially prepared for the unwilling candidate, the garment of a clerical bystander was borrowed for the purpose, that the name of this bystander chanced to be Augustus, and that thus the promises of the sorcerers to the Prefect were literally fulfilled, since he had been 'wrapped in the mantle of Augustus.'

John's attempted arrest.

His escape and capture.

He is wrapped in the mantle of Augustus.

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541. Further fortunes of John of Cappadocia.

By the favour of the Emperor, who had not yet lost his kindly feeling towards him, the new-made priest was allowed to retain a sufficient portion of his vast and ill-gotten wealth to excite the sore envy of his fellow-citizens. The murder of a highly unpopular bishop of Cyzicus, of which crime John was unjustly accused, afforded a pretext to the Commissioners of the Senate to inflict upon him a terrible punishment. The former Consul, Patrician, and Prefect was stripped naked, like the meanest criminal, grievously scourged, and compelled to recite in a loud voice all the misdeeds of his past life. Then, with no possessions but one rough mantle, bought for a few pence, he was shipped on board a vessel bound for the coast of Africa. At what port soever the ship touched he was constrained to go on shore and beg for a crust of bread or a few obols from the passers-by. Such was the fall of the man whose wealth had been counted by millions, and who had once been practically lord of Asia. Still, even in his abject misery, he cherished his old dreams of coming empire, and in fact, after
548 seven years of exile[1], he was, upon the death of Theodora, recalled by her husband to the capital. He regained, however, none of his former honours, but spent the rest of his life in obscurity, and died a simple presbyter.

Antonina in favour with Theodora.

The help which Antonina had given to the Empress in this deadly duel with the Prefect made the former one of the most important personages in the State. Theodora was not ungrateful, and her influence, now all-powerful, was thrown enthusiastically into the scale on behalf of her new ally. Hence, to go back to the

[1] Passed at Cyzicus and Antinoopolis.

dreary domestic history of Belisarius, it is easy to understand why the General was prevented from inflicting punishment on his faithless wife. Antonina's petition for help reached the ears of Theodora. She was herself delivered from her prison, Photius was tortured (but in vain) to make him reveal the place where Theodosius was confined, and was then thrown into a dark dungeon. He made two attempts to flee, after each of which Theodora caused him to be dragged away from the Holy Table itself, under which he had taken refuge. At length, however, he escaped to Jerusalem, where, taking the habit of a monk, he, by a life of obscurity and hardship, succeeded in evading the further persecutions of his unnatural mother and her Imperial ally.

Photius tortured and imprisoned.

The Empress at length succeeded in discovering the retreat of Theodosius, and, as if she were performing the most meritorious of actions, restored him to the arms of Antonina. Belisarius, cowed and spirit-broken by the malice of two wicked women, was forced humbly to beg forgiveness from the wife who had so deeply wronged him. Tortures, banishment, loss of property, were the punishments showered upon the unhappy dependents of Belisarius and Photius, who had sided with their masters against the adulteress. The guilty intimacy of Antonina and her lover was soon dissolved by the death of Theodosius, who fell a victim to an attack of dysentery; but from this time onwards the General was made to feel that he was an outcast from the Imperial favour, and that only as Antonina's husband was he to expect even toleration at the hands of Theodora. Such was the reward which services, perhaps the most brilliant and the most faithful which

Theodosius brought back to Antonina.

Belisarius humbled.

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ever were rendered by a subject to his sovereign, received at the Court of Byzantium.

541. Virtual abolition of the Consulship.

The year 541, which saw the fall of John of Cappadocia, was also memorable in the history of the Roman State, as witnessing the death of that venerable institution, which had survived the storms of ten centuries and a half, the Roman Consulship. For some years the nominations to this high office had been scanty and intermittent. There were no consuls in 531 and 532. The Emperor held the office alone in 533, and with a colleague in 534. Belisarius was sole consul in 535. The two following years, having no consuls of their own, were styled the First and the Second after the Consulship of Belisarius. John of Cappadocia gave his name to the year 538, and the years 539 and 540 had again consuls, though one only for each year. In 541 Albinus Basilius[1] sat in the curule chair, and he was practically the last of the long list of warriors, orators, demagogues, courtiers, which began (in the year 509 B.C.) with the names of Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus. All the rest of the years of Justinian, twenty-four in number, were reckoned as 'Post Consulatum Basilii.' Afterwards, each succeeding Emperor assumed the style of consul in the first year of his reign, but the office, thus wholly absorbed in the sun of Imperial splendour, ceased to have even that faint reflection of its former glory, which we have traced in the fifth and sixth

[1] His full name was Anicius Faustus Albinus Basilius. He was a senator of Old Rome, who, after the capture of the city in 546 fled to Constantinople. (See Liber Pontificalis: Vita Vigilii, p. 298, in Duchesne: quoted and corrected by Usener, Anecd. Holderi, pp. 8 and 14).

centuries. The pretext for abolishing a dignity so closely connected with the remembrance of the heroic days of the Roman State was, that the nobles upon whom it was conferred frittered away their substance in pompous shows exhibited to the people. The real reason doubtless was that precisely by means of those glorious associations it kept alive in the minds of men some remembrance of the days when the Emperor was not all in all, nay, was not yet even heard of. Consuls, as the centuries rolled on, had found their power encroached upon and limited by the Dictators, who seemed to be imperatively called for by the disorders of the Roman State. The temporary figure of the Dictator had given way to the Imperator, the Princeps invested with Tribunician powers, the undefined All-ruler who was yet only first citizen in the commonwealth, the wonderful Republican Autocrat whom Julius and Augustus had imagined and had bodied forth. Gradually the Imperator had become more of a king and less of a citizen, till under Diocletian the adoring senators, the purple sandals, all the paraphernalia of Eastern royalty, marked him out as visibly supreme. Still, many remains of the old Roman constitution, especially the venerable magistracy of the Consulship, subsisting side by side with the new dominion, bore witness to the old order out of which it sprang. Now, the last remains of the withered calyx fall away, and the Imperial dignity exhibits itself to the world, an absolute and undisguised autocracy. The Emperor is the sole source of power; the people have not to elect, but to obey.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ELEVATION OF TOTILA.

Authority.

Source:

BOOK V. CH. 15.

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 1–9.

Confusion in Italy after the departure of Belisarius.

No stronger proof of the superiority of Belisarius, both as a general and a ruler, could be afforded than the disasters which befell the Imperial cause in Italy after his departure. There can be little doubt that Justinian's chief reason for recalling him was the fear that he might listen to some such proposition as that made to him by the Goths during the siege of Ravenna and might claim independent sovereignty. The fact that he was not sent against Chosroës till the spring of 541 proves that jealousy was Justinian's main motive, and heavily was he punished for that jealousy by the subsequent course of the war. Italy appeared to be recovered for the Empire when Belisarius entered Ravenna in triumph. Six months more of the great General's presence in the peninsula would probably have turned that appearance into a reality. But as it was, the stone of Sisyphus had only just touched the topmost angle of the cliffs. When Belisarius went, it thundered down again into the plains. The struggle had all to be fought over again, and twelve years of war, generally disastrous to the Imperial arms, had to be

encountered before Italy was really united to the Roman Commonwealth.

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Officers who returned with Belisarius.

The officers who accompanied Belisarius on his return to Constantinople were Ildiger his son-in-law, Valerian, Martin, and Herodian. All of these generals except Herodian, who was speedily sent back to Italy, distinguished themselves in the Persian war[1].

Officers who remained in Italy.

The chiefs of the army who were left in Italy were John the nephew of Vitalian, John 'the Glutton,' Bessas the Goth, Vitalius, and Constantian 'the Count of the Imperial Stables[2].' The last two had commanded in Dalmatia, till the cessation of the Gothic resistance in that quarter allowed them to be transferred to Italy.

No General-in-chief.

Among all these generals there was none placed in supreme command. Constantian as commandant of Ravenna, and Bessas, either at this time or soon after governor of Rome, were placed in two of the most prominent positions in the country. John's military record was the most brilliant, and probably with all his faults he would, if appointed General-in-chief, have soon brought the war to a successful termination. But no—the studious Emperor was not going to encounter again the same agony of jealous apprehension which had caused each successive bulletin from Belisarius to be like a stab in his heart. Forgetful therefore of the fine old Homeric maxim,

'Ill is the rule of the many: let one alone be the ruler[3],'

[1] Was Ildiger involved in the disgrace of Belisarius in 543? We do not seem to hear of him after this date.

[2] 'Comes Sacri Stabuli.' The predecessor of the Grand Connestable of the French monarchy.

[3] Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω (Iliad, ii. 204).

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he left the generals with an equality of authority to hold and govern Italy each according to his own ideas [1]. Naturally, these ideas were in each case to plunder as much and to fight as little as possible. The bonds of discipline were soon utterly relaxed, and the rapacious, demoralised army of the Emperor became formidable to the peaceful provincials, but to no one else.

Financial oppression.

Now too the power of that terrible engine of oppression, the Byzantine taxing-system, began to make itself felt in Italy. Justinian's first care with all his conquests was to make them pay. With an extravagant wife, a pompous and costly court, with that rage for building which seems to be engendered by the very air of Constantinople, with multitudes of hostile tribes hovering round his frontiers who required constant bribes to prevent them from exposing the showy weakness of his Empire, with all these many calls upon him Justinian was perpetually in need of money; and the scourge, the rack, the squalid dungeon, as we have seen in the last chapter, were freely used in order to obtain it. That odious analogy to a great Roman household which had now thoroughly established itself in the once free commonwealth of Rome, and which made the Emperor a master and his subjects slaves, seemed to justify any excess of rapine. If we could scrutinise the heart of the Dardanian peasant's son who sat on the throne of the Caesars, we should probably find that his secret thought was something like this: 'It is the business of my generals to conquer for me new provinces. The inhabitants of those provinces

[1] It seems probable that there was some territorial division between the different commands, but what it was Procopius does not inform us.

become my slaves, and must pay whatever I command them. It is my privilege to spend the money which I condescend to receive from them exactly for such purposes as I choose.'

Justinian's failure as an economist.

With these high notions of prerogative in his mind, Justinian became one of the most ruinous governors to his Empire that the world has ever seen. The reader need not be reminded of the dreary story of fiscal oppression which in Constantinople, in Africa, in Lydia, has already met his view[1]. The eighteen new taxes with fearful and unheard-of names, the stringently-exercised rights of preëmption, the cruel *angaria* which, like the French *corvées*, consumed the strength of the peasant in unremunerated labour, all these made the yoke of the Emperor terrible to his subjects. And yet, as was before pointed out, notwithstanding this extreme rigour in collecting the taxes, the reproductive expenditure of the Empire was not attended to: the aqueducts were not kept up, the *cursus publicus* or public post, the best legacy received from the flourishing days of the Empire, was suffered to fall into irretrievable ruin. Everywhere the splendour of the reign of Justinian—and there was splendour and an appearance of prosperity about it—was obtained by living upon the capital of the country. Everywhere, by his fiscal oppression as well as by his persecuting attempts to produce religious conformity, he was preparing the provinces of the East, pale, emaciated, and miserable, for the advent of the Moslem conquerors, who, within a century of his death, were to win the fairest of them, and were to hold them even to our own day.

[1] See vol. iii. pp. 554–555; vol. iv. p. 26.

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The Logothetes in Italy.

In order to deal with the fiscal questions arising in the newly-recovered provinces, Justinian appears to have created a special class of officers, who bore the name of Logothetes, and whose functions correspond to those which with us are exercised by an auditor or comptroller. Doubtless some such machinery was necessary to enable the Emperor to take up the financial administration of two great countries, somewhat entangled by the supremacy of Vandal and Ostrogothic kings (however true it might be that the subordinate officers in the revenue department had remained Roman), and also to appraise at their just value, often to reduce, the large claims which the soldiers by whom the conquest had been wrought would make against the Imperial treasury. Some such machinery was necessary, but it should have been worked with a due regard to the eternal principles of justice and to the special and temporary expediency of winning the affections of a people who for two generations had not seen the face of an Imperial tax-gatherer.

Alexander 'the Scissors.'

Both justice and expediency, however, were disregarded by the freshly appointed Logothetes, and especially by the chief of the new department. This man, Alexander by name, received the surname of *Psalidion* or the Scissors, from a bitter joke which was current about him among the oppressed provincials, who declared that he could clip the gold coins that came into his hands without injuring their roundness, and reissue them without risk of detection. He, like all the other Logothetes, was paid by the results of his work, receiving one-twelfth of all that by his various devices he recovered for the Imperial Treasury. From a very humble station in life he soon rose to great

power and accumulated enormous wealth, which he displayed with vulgar ostentation before the various classes of men whom his exactions were grinding into the dust.

Alienation of the soldiery.

The first of these classes were the soldiers, for the Logothete was the natural enemy of the soldier, and Justinian deemed himself now secure enough in his hold on Italy to kick down the ladder by which he had risen. Every offence against the public peace—and the wild swarms of Huns, Isaurians, Heruli, whom Belisarius had brought into Italy, when his strong hand was removed, no doubt committed many such offences—had to be atoned for by a heavy fine to the Imperial treasury, one-twelfth of which went into the coffers of Alexander the Logothete. The endeavour to punish was praiseworthy, but it would have been wise to employ some sharp military punishment in cases of signal offence, and above all, to make the generals feel that they were responsible for the good conduct of their men, rather than to create the general feeling that while the Logothete was rolling in wealth the soldiers whose stout hearts had reconquered Italy were shrinking into a poor, despised, and beggared remnant, and would undertake no more daring deeds for the Emperor who had requited them with such ingratitude.

Promotion stopped.

Not in Italy only, but throughout the Empire, another form of embezzlement practised by the Logothetes told terribly upon the efficiency of the army. The system of payment of the soldiers at this time was one of advance according to length of service. The young soldier received little, perhaps nothing besides his arms and his rations. The man who had seen

some years' service and who was half way up on the rolls of the legion was more liberally dealt with. The veteran who would shortly leave the ranks received a very handsome salary, out of which he was expected to provide for his superannuation fund and to leave something to his family. Of course, promotion to these more favoured positions depended on the retirement or death of those who occupied them. But the Logothetes, intent on curtailing the soldier's allowances for the Emperor's profit and their own, hit upon the expedient of keeping the highly paid places full of phantom warriors. A veteran might have died a natural death, retired from the service, or fallen in battle, but still his name was borne on the rolls of his legion; and thus an excuse was afforded for keeping the middle-aged and elderly combatant still upon the lowest scale of pay. Procopius hints that Justinian himself connived at a system so grossly unfair to the soldiers and so absurdly deceptive as to the real strength of the army [1].

The Greek nationality scorned.

Among the various frivolous pretences for abridging the soldier's pay or cancelling his right to promotion we hear with surprise that one was derived from their Greek nationality. 'They were called Greeks, as if it was quite out of the question for one of that nation to show anything like high courage [2].' This passage shows us, what we might have expected, that these exactions were tried more frequently on the docile native soldier than on the fiery and easily unsettled barbarian auxiliary. It also brings before us the

[1] Procopius, Anecdota, 24 (pp. 133, 134).

[2] Ἐπικαλοῦντες τοῖς μὲν ὡς Γραῖκοι εἶεν, ὥσπερ οὐκ ἐξὸν τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τὸ παράπαν τινὶ γενναίῳ γενέσθαι (Proc. loc. cit.).

officials of the great monarchy by the Bosporus, men who were themselves Greek in their names, their language, and their ideas, still acting the part of pure-blooded Roman governors, and affecting to speak of the men who were in fact their countrymen with the old Roman disdain, the disdain which was not altogether unreasonable in the conquerors of Pydna and Cynoscephalae.

Wrongs of the provincials.

Having filled the soldiery with a burning sense of wrong, Alexander proceeded to alienate as thoroughly as possible the Roman inhabitants of Italy, whose good-will had so greatly aided the progress of Belisarius. All Italians who had had any pecuniary transactions with the Gothic kings, or had held office under them, were called upon to produce a strict account of all moneys had and received, even though such moneys had passed through their hands forty years ago in the early days of Theodoric. Very possibly the easy-tempered King and his Gothic nobles had not been served with absolute fidelity by the sharp Italian officials. 'But what concern is that of yours?' they naturally enquired. 'It is not the Emperor who suffered: nay, rather, we might have thought that we were serving the Emperor by every *aureus* that we withheld from the most powerful of his foes.' But now was again exemplified the elasticity which marked all the reasonings of the Imperial cabinet on the subject of the Gothic domination in Italy. When that domination appeared to be hopelessly overthrown, Byzantium reverted to the theory which it had so often played with, that Theodoric and his successors had been the lawful governors of Italy *under* Anastasius, Justin, and

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Justinian, that they had been by no means usurpers, but regular vicegerents, and therefore that an action for embezzlement (*de pecuniis repetundis*) would lie in the Emperor's name against all officials of the Ostrogothic Kings who had not faithfully discharged their trust. But this theory was not popular in Italy; and enforced as it was by grasping Logothetes, regardless of all principles of justice as to the kind of evidence which they required for transactions long past and forgotten, it swelled the chorus of discontent which was arising in all parts of the peninsula against the tyrant who had been hailed as a deliverer.

The Gothic cause revives.

By all these causes the smouldering embers of the Gothic resistance were soon fanned into a flame. When Belisarius left Italy, Ildibad held only one city, Pavia, and had but one thousand soldiers. Before the year was ended[1], all Liguria and Venetia, that is all Italy north of the Po, recognised his sway, and an army of considerable size (largely composed of deserters from the Imperial standard) was under his orders. All the generals but one watched this sudden development of the Gothic power with apathy. Vitalius alone, who was lately commanding in Dalmatia and now in Venetia, moved with his hordes of Herulian auxiliaries against Ildibad. A great battle followed near Treviso—not many miles from the little trembling colony of salt-manufacturers at Venice—and this battle was disastrous for the Imperialists. Vitalius himself with difficulty escaped. Theudimund son of Maurice and grandson of Mundus

Autumn, 540 (?).

Defeat of Vitalius.

[1] Apparently, but the notes of time are not very distinct here.

the Gepid[1], a young lad who thus represented three generations of Imperial defeat, was in imminent peril of his life, but just succeeded in escaping, along with Vitalius. Wisand, King of the Heruli, lay dead upon the field.

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540.

Dissensions between the wife of Ildibad and the wife of Uraias.

The tidings of this victory, which were soon carried to Constantinople, made the name of Ildibad of great account in the mouths of all men. Domestic dissensions, however, soon cut short a career which promised to be of great brilliance. If Uraias the nephew of Witigis could forget, his wife could not, that the Gothic crown had been offered to him and that Ildibad reigned by virtue of his refusal. This lady, who was conspicuous among all her countrywomen for beauty and for the wealth which she lavishly displayed, was one day proceeding to the baths with much barbaric pomp of raiment and retinue. At the same moment the wife of Ildibad happened to pass, in mean attire and with scant attendance; for Ildibad had lost his possessions as well as his children by the fall of Ravenna, and there had been no time as yet to form another royal hoard. The wife of the chief who would not reign offered no obeisance to the wife of the actual King, and even allowed it to be seen that she was jeering with her attendants at that honourable poverty. The insult, and the burning tears with which his wife told the tale, maddened the heart of Ildibad. He began to traduce his benefactor, accusing him of disloyalty to the national cause, and before long caused him to be assassinated.

Death of Uraias.

From that day Ildibad's hold on the hearts of

[1] See p. 17.

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541. Assassination of Ildibad, May (?), 541.

his countrymen was gone, and he also soon fell a victim to the hand of the assassin. One of his guards, named Wilas, a Gepid by birth, was betrothed to a young maiden whom he loved with passionate ardour. During his absence on some military duty, the King, either from forgetfulness or caprice, conferred the hand of the damsel on another of his followers. From the moment that he heard the tidings, Wilas, maddened with the wrong, vowed his master's death; and he found many willing accomplices, for the blood of Uraias cried for vengeance. There came a day when Ildibad was feasting right royally in his palace, with all his guards in bright armour standing round him. The King stretched forth his hand to grasp some delicate morsel; but, overcome apparently by the wine that he had drunk[1], fell forward on the couch. Wilas saw his opportunity, stepped forward, drew his sword, and severed his master's neck at one blow. With amazement and horror the bystanders saw the head of Ildibad roll upon the festive board, even while his fingers yet clutched the morsel that was never to be eaten. Nothing is said as to any punishment of the murderer.

Eraric the Rugian chosen King.

The death of Ildibad occurred about May, 541, a year after the departure of Belisarius and six years from the commencement of the war. He was succeeded by Eraric the Rugian, whose precarious royalty was, however, never fully acknowledged by the remnant of the Gothic nation. It will be remembered that a part of the Rugian people had

[1] Procopius does not say this, but his words seem to imply it: Ὁ μὲν οὖν τὴν χεῖρα ἐπιβαλὼν ἐς τὰ βρώματα ἐπὶ τῆς στιβάδος πρηνὴς ἔκειτο.

followed the standards of Theodoric into Italy and had shared his victories and his revenge over their deadly enemy Odovacar. Notwithstanding the subsequent treachery of Frederic their King, the bulk of the little nation remained faithful subjects of the Ostrogothic royalty, but though they loyally did his bidding in battle they remained a separate nationality, marrying only the women of their own tribe, and probably having justice administered by their own chiefs[1]. This fragment of a nation, in the distress and discouragement of their Gothic friends, aspired to give a king to the whole confederacy: a pretension almost as audacious as if in the party disputes at the close of the reign of Queen Anne the Huguenot refugees had signified their willingness to place one of their number on the throne of Great Britain.

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Eraric reigned only five months, during which time he performed not a single noteworthy action against the enemy, but devoted his chief energies to those illusory negotiations with Constantinople which were the natural resource of a barbarian king doubtful of the loyalty of his subjects. He called together a general assembly of the Goths, and proposed to them to send ambassadors to Justinian, offering peace upon the same terms which had been suggested to Witigis: all Italy south of the Po to be the Emperor's, the rest to belong to the Goths. The assembly approved, and

Reign of Eraric, May to October (?), 541.

Negotiations between Eraric and Justinian.

[1] *Οἱ δὲ Ῥόγοι οὗτοι ἔθνος μέν εἰσι Γοτθικόν, αὐτόνομοί τε τὸ παλαιὸν ἐβίουν. Θευδερίχου δὲ αὐτοὺς τὸ κατ' ἀρχὰς προσεταιρισαμένου ξὺν ἄλλοις τισὶν ἔθνεσιν, ἔς τε τὸ γένος ἀπεκέκριντο καὶ ξὺν αὐτοῖς ἐς τοὺς πολεμίους ἅπαντα ἔπρασσον. γυναιξὶ μέντοι ὡς ἥκιστα ἐπιμιγνύμενοι ἀλλοτρίαις, ἀκραιφνέσι παίδων διαδοχαῖς τὸ τοῦ ἔθνους ὄνομα ἐν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς διεσώσαντο* (Procop. De B. Gotth. iii. 2).

BOOK V. CH. 15. 541.

the ambassadors set forth on their journey; but it is scarcely necessary to state that they bore also a secret commission by virtue of which Eraric offered to sell his people and the whole of Italy to Justinian upon the usual terms, the Patriciate, a large sum of money, and a splendid establishment at Constantinople.

Dissatisfaction of the Goths.

But in the mean time the hearts of all the Gothic people, sore for the loss of Ildibad, from whose mighty arm they had expected deliverance, and impatient at the feeble gropings after a policy of this Rugian kinglet whom accident had set over them, were turning with more and more of hope and loyalty to one still remaining scion of the house of Ildibad.

They turn to Baduila (Totila), nephew of Ildibad.

This was his nephew Baduila, a man still young for command[1], but one whose courage and capacity had already been much talked of at the council-table and the banquet. At the moment of his uncle's murder he was in command of the garrison at Treviso: and when he heard the tidings of that lamentable event, thinking that it was all over with Gothic freedom, he sent messengers to Ravenna offering to surrender his stronghold on receiving pledges from Constantian for the safety of himself and his soldiers. The offer was gladly accepted, the day for the surrender fixed, the Roman generals looked upon Treviso as already theirs, when the whole aspect of the case was changed by a deputation

[1] I think we have no precise indication of Totila's age at his accession. We know, however, that he was the nephew of Ildibad, who was the nephew of Theudis, who was apparently a somewhat younger contemporary of Theodoric. Probably therefore he was not born earlier than 515, and was about five or six and twenty when he became King.

541.

He is made King instead of Eraric, who is slain.

from the discontented Goths offering the crown to Baduila. The young chief told them with perfect openness all that had passed between him and Constantian, but agreed, if the Rugian adventurer were removed before the day fixed for his capitulation, to cancel his agreement with Ravenna and to accept the dangerous honour of the kingship. The negotiations of Eraric with the Emperor, both those which were avowed and those which were only suspected, no doubt hardened the hearts of the Gothic patriots against him and quickened their zeal: and thus it came to pass that in the autumn of 541, long before the messengers had returned from Constantinople, Eraric had been slain by the conspirators and the young Baduila had been raised on the shield as King.

Double form of his name, Baduila and Totila.

The unanimous testimony of the coins of the new King proves that Baduila was that form of his name by which he himself chose to be known [1]. From some cause, however, which has not been explained, he was also known even to the Goths [2] as TOTILA, and this name is the only one which seems to have reached the ears of the Greek historians. It is useless now to attempt to appeal from their decision, and the

[1] Friedlaender (Die Münzen der Ostgothen, 46–51), after enumerating several types of silver and copper coinage bearing the name of D(ominus) N(oster) Baduila Rex, says emphatically, 'The name of Totila occurs on not a single coin.'

[2] I think the fact that Jordanes uses and prefers this form justifies us in making this assertion. He begins by saying (De Regn. Successione, 379), 'Malo Italiae Baduila juvenis nepus (sic) asciscitur Heldebadi.' A few lines later we find, 'Totila qui Baduila hostile opus in Italia peragit:' and after this he is always Totila in Jordanes. It may be noticed that Jordanes once makes the accusative Totilam, and twice Totilanem.

BOOK V. CH. 15. name Totila is that by which he will be mentioned henceforward in this history.

541. Totila's character. The new King wielded the Ostrogothic sceptre for eleven years, a longer period than any of his predecessors since the great Theodoric. Coming to the help of his countrymen when their cause seemed sunk below hope, he succeeded in raising it to a height of glory such as even under Theodoric himself it had scarcely surpassed. Though almost the last, he was quite the noblest flower that bloomed upon the Ostrogothic stem, gentle, just, and generous, as well as a valiant soldier and an able statesman. Though he first appears before us, engaged in somewhat doubtful transactions, breaking his agreement with Constantian and counselling the death of Eraric, he is upon the whole one of the best types of the still future age of chivalry that the Downfall of the Empire can exhihit: and in fact we may truthfully say of him in the words of Chaucer—

'He was a very perfite gentil knight.'

The generals reprimanded by Justinian. The tidings of the ill-success of the Imperial arms and of the death of Eraric were conveyed to Justinian, who sent a severe reprimand to the generals for their supineness and misgovernment. Stung by this rebuke, having assembled a council of war at Ravenna, at which all the chief generals were present as well as Alexander the Logothete, they resolved to besiege Verona, the key to Totila's Venetian province, and as soon as that city was taken to press on to Pavia and extinguish the Gothic monarchy in its last asylum. The plan was strategically sound, and its failure was only due to the really ludicrous rapacity of the generals. An army of 12,000 men, under the com-

mand of eleven generals[1], advanced into the wide and fertile plains south of Verona, where their cavalry could operate with great advantages against the enemy. Moreover, a nobleman of the province of Venetia named Marcian, who dwelt near to Verona and favoured the Imperial cause[2], sent word to the generals that he had bribed one of the sentinels to open a gate of that city to the Imperial forces. The generals, not feeling absolutely sure that this offer was made in good faith, invited volunteers for the dangerous task of commanding a small picked force, which should advance in front of the army and be admitted under cover of night within the walls of Verona. No one was willing to undertake the duty but Artabazes, a Persian[3], who in the Eastern campaign of 541 had attached himself to the fortunes of Belisarius and had been sent by him to serve in the Italian war. Having selected one hundred and twenty of the bravest men in the army[4] he advanced at dead of night to the walls, and was admitted inside the gate by the sentinel, faithful in his treachery: his followers then slew the surrounding guards and mounted to the

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542.

Designs on Verona.

Artabazes volunteers to enter the city.

[1] Ἄρχοντες δὲ αὐτῶν ἕνδεκα ἦσαν (Proc. iii. 3). I am not quite sure that Gibbon is right in inferring from this passage that the number of generals in Italy with supreme and equal powers was eleven. All the supreme generals might not share the expedition to Verona, and all the ἕνδεκα ἄρχοντες need not have been supreme generals.

[2] There cannot be much doubt that Marcian was of Roman, not Gothic origin, though this is not expressly stated by Procopius.

[3] Probably an inhabitant of Armenia, the Afghanistan of the two empires, in which there was always both a Roman and a Persian party.

[4] Not 'one hundred Persians' (Gibbon, v. 215, ed. Smith). They were ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς στρατοπέδου ἀπολεχθέντες.

BOOK V. CH. 15. 542. battlements. The Goths, finding out what had happened, threw up the game, retired through the northern gate to one of the hills overlooking the town, and there passed the night.

The enterprize fails. With the smallest fraction of military capacity the important city of Verona would now have been recovered for the Emperor. But the eleven generals, having started with the bulk of the army at the appointed time, began, when they were still five miles distant, to dispute as to the division of the spoil. The quarrel was at length adjusted, but meantime the sun had risen, and there was broad daylight over the old amphitheatre, over the swirling Adige, over the streets and market-places of Verona. The Goths from their hill-side took in the whole position of affairs, and saw by what an insignificant band they had been ousted from the city. Rushing in again by the northern gate, of which they had not given up possession, they drove Artabazes and his band to take refuge behind the battlements of the southern portion of the wall[1]. At this moment the Roman army and the eleven generals arrived under the walls and found all the gates barred, and all the circuit of the city, except one small part, occupied by their foes. Vainly did Artabazes and his friends shout to them for help. They withdrew with all speed, and the little band whom they thus left to their fate had no resource but to leap headlong from the battlements. The greater number were killed by the fall. A few who had the good-fortune to alight on smooth soft ground escaped. Among these latter was Artabazes, who, when he

[1] Probably a covered way ran round the inner side of the wall, as in the fortifications of Rome.

reached the camp, inveighed bitterly against the cowardice and incapacity of the generals, which had brought so promising an enterprise to disaster.

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The generals march to Faenza.

Recognising the failure of their design to reconquer Venetia, the whole army crossed the Po and mustered again near Faventia, a town on the Aemilian Way, about twenty miles[1] south-west of Ravenna. This place still survives in the modern Faenza, a bright little city of the plain, nestling under the shadow of the Apennines. Its early advances in the ceramic art have made the name of *faïence* familiar to all French dealers in earthenware.

Totila marches after them.

When Totila learned what had passed at Verona he set forth with his whole army in pursuit of the Roman generals. So dwindled, however, was the Gothic force, that those words 'the whole army' still described a force of only five thousand men. While he was still on the northern bank of the Po, Artabazes, who had not ridden in vain beside Belisarius to battle, and who is the only soldier whose deeds shed a brief lustre across this part of the annals of the Imperial army, implored his brother generals to attack the barbarians in the act of crossing, so that they might have only one part of the Gothic force to deal with at once. He truly said that they need not trouble their minds about the alleged ingloriousness of such a victory. In war success was everything, and if they defeated the foe, men would not narrowly scrutinise the means by which they had overcome. But the generals, having each his own scheme for conducting the campaign, could accept no common plan of action, not even the obvious one suggested by Artabazes, but remained

The counsel of Artabazes not taken.

[1] Procopius's estimate, 120 stadia, is rather under the mark.

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inactive in the plain of Faenza, for which course they had, it must be admitted, one excuse, in that they thereby barred the Aemilian Way against the southward progress of the invader.

Totila's speech to his soldiers.

Here then Totila, having crossed the Po without opposition, met the many-generalled forces of the enemy. In a most spirit-stirring speech he called upon his soldiers for one supreme effort of valour. He did not dissemble the difficulties of their situation. The Romans if defeated could take shelter in their fortresses, or could await reinforcements from Byzantium; but *they* had no such hope. Defeat for them meant ruin, the utter ruin of the Gothic cause in Italy. But, on the other hand, victory earned that day would bring with her every promise for the days to come. Blundering and defeat had reduced the army of the Goths from two hundred thousand men to one thousand, and their kingdom from the fair land of Italy to the single city of Ticinum. But then, one victory gained by the gallant Ildibad had multiplied their numbers five-fold, and had given them for one city all the lands north of the great river. Another victory now, with the blessing of God on their endeavours, with the favour and sympathy of all the Italians wearied out by the exactions of the Byzantine taxgatherers, might restore to them all that they had lost. And such a victory they might surely win against the recent dastards of Verona.

Battle of Faenza.

After this harangue Totila selected three hundred men, who were to cross the river[1] at a point two miles

[1] What river? Not the Po, which is nearly sixty miles north of Faenza. Probably the Anemo (now Lamone), which flows in a north-easterly direction past the town. But the want of clear-

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and a-half distant and fall upon the rear of the enemy when the battle was joined. Then the two armies set themselves in battle array; but before the fight began, one of those single combats in which the barbarians in both armies delighted, and which seem more congenial to the instincts of mediaeval chivalry than to the scientific discipline of the old Imperial legion, occupied the attention of both armies. A Goth, mighty in stature and terrible in aspect, Wiliaris by name, completely armed, with helmet and coat of mail, rode forth into the space between the two armies, and, Goliath-like, challenged the Romans to an encounter. All shrank from accepting the challenge except the gallant Persian, Artabazes. Couching their spears at one another the two champions spurred their horses to a gallop. The Persian's spear penetrated the right lung of the Goth. Instant death followed, but the spear in the dead man's hand, having become jammed against a piece of rock below him, prevented him from falling and gave him still the erect attitude of life. Artabazes pressed on to complete his victory, and drew his sword to smite his enemy through his coat of mail, but in doing so, by some sudden swerve of his horse, his own neck was grazed by the upright spear of the dead Wiliaris. It seemed a mere scratch at first, and he rode back in triumph to his comrades: but an artery had been pierced, the blood would not be stanched, and in three days the gallant Artabazes was numbered with the dead. Thus did a dead man slay the living.

Single combat between Wiliaris and Artabazes.

While Artabazes, out of reach of bow-shot, was vainly endeavouring to stanch his wound, the battle

Defeat of the Imperial army.

ness in topographical detail makes it probable that Procopius was not an eye-witness of this engagement.

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was going ill with the Romans. Totila's three hundred men appearing in the rear were taken for the vanguard of another army, and completed the incipient panic. The generals fled headlong from the field, one to take refuge in one city, another in another. Multitudes of the soldiers were slain, multitudes taken prisoners and sent to a place of safety; and *all* the standards fell into the hands of the enemy, a disgrace which, Procopius assures us, had never before befallen a Roman army[1].

Totila in Tuscany, April (?), 542.

Totila now found himself strong enough to strike boldly across the Apennines—probably taking, not the Flaminian but the Cassian Way—and so try to gain a footing in Tuscany. With this view he sent a detachment of soldiers[2] to besiege Florence. Fiesole, on its inaccessible height, he probably deemed too difficult for his little army. Justin, who had distinguished himself in these regions three years before, was now commandant of the Imperial garrison of Florence; but, fearing that he was too weak in men and provisions to hold out long, he sent messengers by night to Ravenna to ask for relief. A force, probably a strong force, was sent to his aid under the command of his old friend and colleague Cyprian, together with John and Bessas. At the approach of this large body of troops the Goths raised the siege of Florence and retreated northwards up the valley of the Sieve, which still bears in popular usage the name by which Procopius calls it, the valley

Florence besieged.

[1] But this must surely be a mistake. At the Caudine Forks and at Carrhae, to mention no other defeats of the Romans, all the standards must have been lost.

[2] Under the command of Bleda, Roderic, and Uliaris. The first name reminds us of the brother of Attila, the second, of the last Visigothic King, the third, of the just slain Wiliaris.

of Mugello[1]. It was thought unadvisable by the Imperial generals to risk an engagement with their whole force in the gorges of the mountains, and it was decided that one of their number, with a picked body of troops, should seek out and engage the Goths, while the rest of the army followed at their leisure. The lot fell on John the venturesome and precipitate, who, nothing loth, pushed on up the rocky valley. The Goths had stationed themselves on a hill, from which they rushed down with loud shouts upon the foe. There was a little wavering in the Roman ranks. John, with loud shouts and eager gestures, encouraged his men, but one of his guardsmen, a prominent figure in the ranks, was slain; and in the confused noise of the battle it was rumoured that John himself had fallen. Then came wild panic: the Roman troops swept down the valley, and when they met the solid squadrons of their fellow-soldiers, and told them the terrible tidings of the death of the bravest of the generals, they too caught the infection of fear and fled in disgraceful and disorderly flight. Many were slain by the pursuing Goths. Some having been taken prisoners, were treated with the utmost kindness by the politic Totila, and even induced in large numbers to take service under his standard. But others went galloping on for days through Italy, pursued by no man, but bearing everywhere the same demoralising tidings of rout and ruin, and rested not till they found themselves behind the walls of some distant fortress, where they might at least for a time breathe in safety from the fear of Totila.

Battle of Mugello.

[1] *Ἀνεχώρησαν εἰς χωρίον Μουκέλλην ὄνομα.* For some reason or other this name Mugello has disappeared from our modern maps.

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542. Central and Southern Italy opened to the Goths by this battle.

Such, according to Procopius, was the battle, or rather the headlong rout, of Mugello. He was not an eye-witness of the scene, and one is inclined to conjecture that he has overrated the element of mere panic and underrated the strategic skill of the Goths, who had apparently posted themselves on some coign of vantage among the hills from which they could inflict deadly injury on the foe, themselves almost unharmed. But, whatever were the details of the fight, it seems to have opened the whole of Central and Southern Italy to Totila. Cesena, Urbino, Montefeltro[1], Petra Pertusa, all those Umbrian fortresses which it had cost Belisarius two years of hard fighting to win, were now lost to Justinian. Totila pressed on into Etruria. There no great fortress seems to have surrendered to him, and he would not repeat the error of Witigis by dashing his head against the stone walls of Rome. He therefore crossed the Tiber, marched southwards through Campania and Samnium, easily took Beneventum, and rased its walls, that no Byzantine host might shelter there in time to come. The stronghold of Cumae with a large store of treasure fell into his hands. In the same place was a little colony of aristocratic refugees, the wives and daughters of the Senators. Totila treated them with every mark of courtesy, and dismissed them unhurt to their husbands and fathers, an act of chivalry which made a deep impression on the minds of the Romans. All the southern provinces of Italy, Apulia, Calabria, Bruttii, and Lucania, were overrun by his troops. Not all the

Totila in Samnium and Campania.

[1] The names of Urbino and Montefeltro are given on the authority of Marcellinus Comes.

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fortresses in these parts were yet his, but he collected securely and at his ease both the rent of the landowner and the revenue of the Emperor. The oppressions of the Logothetes had revealed to all men that one great motive for the Imperial re-conquest of Italy was revenue; and Totila, by anticipating the visit of the tax-gatherer, stabbed Justinian's administration in a vital part. The barbarian auxiliaries could not be paid: desertions from the Imperial standard became more and more frequent; all the prizes of valour were seen to glitter in the hand of the young Gothic hero, who, encouraged by his marvellous success, determined to wrest from the Emperor the firstfruits of Belisarius's campaigns in Italy. He sat down before the walls of Naples, which was held by a garrison of a thousand men, chiefly Isaurians, under the command of Conon.

Totila besieges Naples.

This sudden transformation of the political scene took place in the summer of 542. And what meanwhile were the Imperial generals doing? Without unity of action or the semblance of concerted plan they were each cowering over the treasure which they had succeeded in accumulating, and which was stored in the several fortresses under their command. Thus Constantian had shut himself up in Ravenna; John, not slain but a fugitive from Mugello, in Rome; Bessas at Spoleto; Justin at Florence (which had not, after all, fallen into the hands of the Goths); and his friend Cyprian at Perugia. Like islands these high fortresses occupied by the Imperial soldiers stand out above the wide-spreading sea of Gothic re-conquest. Even the victorious Totila will not be safe till he has reduced them also to submission.

Inaction and timidity of the Imperial generals.

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542. Maximin appointed General-in-chief.

The terrible news of the re-establishment of the Gothic kingdom in Italy filled Justinian with sorrow at the thought of all his wasted men and treasure. Not yet; however, was he brought to the point of entrusting the sole command to Belisarius: that remedy still seemed to him worse than the disease. He would end, however, the anarchy of the generals by appointing one man as Praetorian Prefect of Italy[1], who should have supreme power over all the armies of the Empire within the peninsula. This was a wise measure in itself, but the holder of the office was badly chosen. Maximin, the new Prefect[2], was quite inexperienced in war, of a sluggish and cowardly temper; and though the generals under him, Herodian the commander of the Thracians[3] and Phazas nephew of Peranius, who came from the gorges of the Caucasus and commanded a brave band of Armenian mountaineers, knew somewhat more about the business of war, their martial energy was deadened by the feebleness of their chief.

Demetrius endeavours to relieve Naples.

This new appointment was made apparently in the autumn of 542. The timid Maximin, afraid to face the unquiet Hadriatic in November, lingered, upon one pretence or another, on the coast of Epirus. All the time the distress of Conon and the beleaguered garrison of Naples was growing more severe. Deme-

[1] Apparently the office had been vacant since the departure of Belisarius.

[2] Probably the same Maximin who had been sent as ambassador to Witigis in 540 (see p. 330).

[3] Herodian was left in charge of Naples after its surrender. He also distinguished himself at the siege of Rimini. It was perhaps on account of some special devotion to Belisarius that he returned with that general to Constantinople in 540.

trius, another officer of the old army of Belisarius, who had been despatched from Constantinople after Maximin, perhaps to quicken his movements, sailed to Sicily and there collected a large fleet of merchantmen, which he filled with provisions, hoping by the mere size of his armament to overawe the Goths and succeed in revictualling Naples. Had he sailed thither at once his bold calculation would probably have been verified: but unfortunately he wasted time in a fruitless journey to Rome, where he hoped to enlist volunteers for the relief of the besieged city. The discontented and demoralised soldiers refused to follow his standard, and after all he appeared in the Bay of Naples with only his provision-ships and the troops which he himself had brought from Constantinople.

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The other Demetrius in Naples.

When the fleet of Demetrius was approaching the bay a little boat appeared, in which sat his namesake, another Demetrius, a Cephalonian seaman whose nautical skill had been of the highest service to Belisarius in his Italian and African voyages. This man was now Financial Administrator[1] of the city of Naples for the Emperor. He had good reason to wish for the success of his namesake the general, since when Totila first summoned the citizens to surrender he had assailed the stately and silent barbarian with such a torrent of voluble abuse as only a foul-mouthed Greek could utter. He had now come, at great hazard of his life, to inform the general of the distress of the beleagured city and to quicken his zeal for its relief.

[1] I use a vague term, not knowing into what title of the Notitia to translate the ἐπίτροπος of Procopius.

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542. Totila defeats the relieving squadron.

But, during the ill-advised journey to Rome, Totila also had obtained information of the movements and character of the relieving squadron. He had prepared a fleet of cutters[1], lightly loaded and easily handled, and with these he dashed into the fleet of heavy merchantmen as soon as they had rounded the promontory of Misenum and entered the Bay of Naples. The unwieldy and feebly-armed vessels were at once steered for flight. All of the ships, all of their cargoes, most of the men on board, were taken. Some of the soldiers were slain; a few who were on board the hindermost vessels of the fleet were able to escape in boats. Among these fugitives was Demetrius the general. His namesake, the unhappy sailor-orator, fell into the hands of Totila, who ordered his abusive tongue and the hands that had been probably too greedy of gold to be cut off, and then suffered the miserable man to go whither he would. A cruel and unkingly deed, not worthy of the gallant Totila.

His cruelty to the Neapolitan Demetrius.

Maximin lingers at Syracuse.

Meanwhile the Prefect Maximin arrived with all his armament in the harbour of Syracuse. Having reached the friendly shore he would not again leave it, though all the generals sent messages urging him to go to the assistance of Conon. But, at length, fear of the Emperor's wrath so far overcame his other fears that he sent his whole armament to Naples under the command of Herodian, Demetrius, and Phazas, tarrying himself quietly at Syracuse. By this time the winter was far advanced and sailing was indeed dangerous. A tremendous storm sprang up just as

January (?), 543.

The storm.

[1] *Dromones.*

the fleet entered the Bay of Naples. Phazas the Armenian seems to have at once abandoned all hope, and fled before the storm. The rowers could not draw their oars out of the water, the deafening roar of the wind and waves drowned the word of command if any officer had presence of mind enough to utter it, and, in short, all the ships but a very few were dashed on shore by the fury of the gale. Of course in these circumstances their crews fell a helpless prey to the Goths who lined the coast.

Demetrius taken prisoner.

Herodian and Phazas with a very few others escaped. Demetrius, this time, fell into the hands of the enemy. With a halter round his neck he was led in front of the walls of the city, and was then compelled—but a man who called himself the countryman of Regulus should not have yielded to such compulsion—to harangue the citizens in such words as Totila dictated. The speech was all upon the necessity of surrender, the impossibility of resisting the Goths, the powerlessness of the Emperor, whose great armament had just been shattered before their eyes, to prepare another for their deliverance. Cries and lamentations filled all the city when the inhabitants, after their long sufferings bravely borne, heard such counsels of despair coming from the lips of a Roman general standing in such humiliating guise before them. Totila, who knew what their frame of mind must be, invited them to the battlements and there held parley. He told them that he had no grudge in his heart against the citizens of Naples, but, on the contrary, would ever remember *their* fidelity to the Gothic crown and the stout defence which they had made against Belisarius seven years

Totila's soothing words to the Neapolitans.

BOOK V. CH. 15. 543. before, when every other city in Italy was rushing into rebellion. Neither ought they on their part to bear any grudge against him for the hardships which the siege had caused them, and which were all part of the kindly violence by which he would force them back into the path of happiness which they had quitted. He then offered his terms: leave to Conon and his soldiers to depart whithersoever they would, taking all their possessions with them, and a solemn oath for the safety of every Neapolitan citizen.

Surrender of Naples. The terms were generous, and both citizens and soldiers, pressed by hunger and pestilence[1], were eager to accept them. Loyalty to the Emperor, however, made them still consent to the surrender only in the event of no help reaching them within thirty days. Totila, with that instinct of repartee which shone forth in him, and which was more like a Greek than a Goth, replied, 'Take three months if you will. I am certain that no succours in that time will arrive from Byzantium.' And with that he promised to abstain for ninety days from all attacks upon their fortifications, but did not repeat the blunder of Witigis, in allowing the process of revictualling to go forward during the truce. Disheartened and worn out with famine, the citizens surrendered the place

May, 543. long before the appointed day, and Naples again became subject to Gothic rule.

Totila's care in feeding the citizens. On becoming master of the city, Totila showed a thoughtful kindness towards the inhabitants, such as, in the emphatic words of Procopius, could have been

[1] Πολλὴ γὰρ ἀνάγκη αὐτοὺς τοῦ λοιμοῦ ἐπίεζε. The Latin version has (inaccurately), 'Urgente *famis* necessitate.'

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expected neither from an enemy nor a barbarian[1]. To obviate the evil consequences of overfeeding after their long abstinence, he posted soldiers in the gates and at the harbour with orders to let none of the inhabitants leave the city. Each house was then supplied with rations of food on a very moderate scale, and the portion given was daily and insensibly increased till the people were again on full diet. Conon and his soldiers were provided with ships, which were ordered to take them to any port that they might name. Fearing to be taunted with their surrender if they went to Constantinople, they elected to be taken to Rome. The wind, however, proved so contrary that they were obliged to return on shore. They feared that the Gothic King might regard himself as now absolved from his promises and might treat them as foes. Far from it: he summoned them to his presence, renewed his promises of protection, and bade them mingle freely with his soldiers and buy in his camp whatever they had need of. As the wind still continued contrary, he provided them with horses and beasts of burden, gave them provisions for the way, and started them on their road for Rome, assigning to them some Gothic warriors of reputation by way of escort. And this, though his own heart was set on taking Rome and he knew that these men were going to swell the ranks of her defenders.

Generous treatment of Conon and his men.

In conformity with his uniform policy (borrowed perhaps from the traditions of Gaiseric), he then dismantled the walls of Naples, or at least a sufficient portion of them to make the city, as he believed,

Fortifications of Naples dismantled.

[1] Φιλανθρωπίαν ἐς τοὺς ἡλωκότας ἐπεδείξατο οὔτε πολεμίῳ οὔτε βαρβάρῳ ἀνδρὶ πρέπουσαν.

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untenable by a Roman army. 'For he preferred ever to fight on the open plain, rather than to be entangled in the artifices and mechanical contrivances which belong to the attack and defence of besieged cities.'

Totila's severity towards a Gothic criminal.

About this time an event happened which showed in a striking light the policy of Totila towards the Italians. A countryman of Calabria appeared in the royal tent, demanding justice upon one of the Gothic King's body-guard who had violated his daughter. The offence was admitted, and the offender was put in ward till Totila should decide upon his punishment. As it was generally believed that this punishment would be death, some of the men of highest rank in the army came to implore the King not to sacrifice for such a fault the life of a brave and capable soldier. With gentle firmness Totila refused their request. He pointed out that it is easy to earn a character for good-nature by letting offenders go unpunished, but that this cheap kindness is the ruin of good government in the state, and of discipline in the army. He enlarged on his favourite theme, that all the vast advantages with which the Goths commenced the war had been neutralised by the vices of Theodahad; and on the other hand, that, by the Divine favour and for the punishment of the rapine and extortion of their foes, the Gothic banner had in a marvellous way been raised again from the dust in which it had lain drooping. Now, then, let the chiefs choose which they would have, the safety of the whole Gothic state or the preservation of the life of this criminal. Both they could not have, for victory would be theirs only so long as their cause was good. The nobles were convinced by his words, and no murmurs were heard when,

a few days after, the ravisher was put to death and his goods bestowed on the maiden whom he had wronged. BOOK V. CH. 15.

Such was the just rule of the barbarian King. Meanwhile the so-called Roman officers, shut up in their several fortresses, seemed intent only on plundering the country which they could not defend. The generals feasted themselves at gorgeous banquets, where their paramours, decked with the spoils of Italy, flaunted their mercenary beauty. The soldiers, dead to all sense of discipline, and despising the orders of such chiefs, wandered through the country districts, wherever the Goths were *not*, pillaging both *villa* and *praedium*, and making themselves far more terrible to the rural inhabitants than the Goths from whom they professed to defend them. Thus was the provincial, especially he who had been a rich provincial, of Italy in evil case. Totila had appropriated his lands and was receiving the revenues which they furnished, and all his moveable property was stolen from him by the soldiers of John or Bessas. 543. Demoralisation of the Imperial army.

The state of the country became at length so intolerable that Constantian, the commandant of Ravenna, wrote to the Emperor that it was no longer possible to defend his cause in Italy; and all the other officers set their hands to this statement. Of this state of discouragement among his enemies Totila endeavoured to avail himself by a letter which he addressed at this time to the Roman Senate. 'Surely,' he said, 'you must in these evil days sometimes remember the benefits which you received, not so very long ago, at the hands of Theodoric and Amalasuntha. Dear Romans[1]! compare the memory of those rulers 544. Despairing message to Justinian. Totila's letter to the Senate.

[1] Ὦ φίλοι Ῥωμαῖοι.

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with what you now know of the kindness of the Greeks towards their subjects. You received these men with open arms, and how have they repaid you? With the griping exactions of Alexander the Logothete, with the insolent oppressions of the petty military tyrants who swagger in your streets. Do not think that as a young man[1] I speak presumptuously, or that as a barbarian king I speak boastfully when I say that we are about to change all this and to rescue Italy from her tyrants. I make this assertion, not trusting to our own valour alone, but believing that we are the ministers of Divine justice against these oppressors, and I implore you not to side against your champions and with your foes, but by such a conspicuous service as the surrender of Rome into our hands to wipe out the remembrance of your past ingratitude.'

Totila's letter placarded in Rome.

This letter was entrusted to some of the captive Romans, with orders to convey it to the Senate. John forbade those who read the letter to return any answer. Thereupon the Gothic King caused several copies of the letter to be made, appended to them his emphatic assurances, sealed by solemn oaths, that he would respect the lives and property of such Romans as should surrender, and sent the letters at night by trusty messengers into the City. When day dawned the Forum and all the chief streets of Rome were found to be placarded with Totila's proclamation. The doers of the deed could not be discovered, but John,

[1] *Ὑμῶν δὲ οἰέσθω μηδεὶς μήτε ὑπὸ νέου φιλοτιμίας τὰ ὀνείδη ταῦτα ἐς αὐτοὺς φέρεσθαι.* This expression (*νέου*) confirms us in the belief that Totila was at this time (544) not over thirty; and that he was therefore probably born at earliest about 515.

suspecting the Arian priests of complicity in the affair, expelled them from the City.

544. Totila besieges Rome and Otranto.

Finding that this was the only answer to his appeal, Totila resolved to undertake in regular form the siege of Rome. He was at the same time occupied in besieging Otranto, which he was anxious to take, as it was the point at which Byzantine reinforcements might be expected to land, in order to raise the standard of the Empire in Calabria. He considered, however, that he had soldiers enough for both enterprises, and, leaving a small detachment to prosecute the siege of Otranto, he marched with the bulk of his army to Rome.

Justinian decides to send Belisarius again to Italy.

Now at length did Justinian, with grief and sighing, come to the conclusion that only one man could cope with this terrible young Gothic champion, and that, even though the Persians were pressing him hard in the East, Belisarius must return to Italy.

But, before we begin to watch the strange duel between the veteran Byzantine General and the young Gothic King, before we turn the pages which record another and yet another siege of Rome, we must devote a little time to the contemplation of the figure of one who, more powerfully than either Belisarius or Totila, moulded the destinies of Italy and Western Europe. The great Lawgiver of European monasticism died just at this time. Let us leave for a space the marches and countermarches of Roman and Barbarian, and stand in spirit with the weeping monks of Monte Cassino by the death-bed of Benedict of Nursia.

CHAPTER XVI.

SAINT BENEDICT.

Authorities.

Sources:—

BOOK V. CH. 16.

'Vita et Miracula Venerabilis Benedicti,' written by Pope GREGORY I in Latin about 594, and translated into Greek by his successor Zacharias (741–752). (The edition here used is that printed at Venice, 1723.)

REGULA S. P. BENEDICTI (Migne's edition, Paris, 1866).

Guides:—

Les Moines d'Occident, par le Comte de Montalembert (1860). Les Monastères Bénédictins d'Italie, par Alphonse Dantier (1867). Milman's History of Latin Christianity, Book III. Chap. vi.

The world-wide fame of Benedict.

BY devious ways, and through a tangle of forgotten or but half-remembered names, we are come to a broad highway trodden by the feet of many reverent generations and made illustrious by some of the best-known figures in the history of mediaeval Christianity. Even in the annals of monasticism the saintly Severinus of Noricum, the studious Cassiodorus of Squillace, are but faintly remembered; but every one who knows anything of the spirit of the Middle Ages is familiar with the name of Benedict of Nursia. His face and the faces of his sister Scholastica, and his pupils Maurus and Placidus, pourtrayed by some of the greatest

painters whom the world has known, look softly down from the walls of endless Italian galleries. His great monastery on Mount Cassino was for centuries, scarcely less than Rome and Jerusalem, the object of the reverent homage of the Christian world. More than either of those two historic cities did it enshrine a still existing ideal for the formation of what was deemed the highest type of human character. In the ninth century the great Emperor Charles ordered an enquiry to be made, as into a point requiring abstruse and careful research, 'Whether there were any monks anywhere in his dominions who professed any other rule than the rule of Saint Benedict[1].' And so it continued to be, till in the thirteenth century those great twin brethren, Francis and Dominic, rose above the horizon, and the holiness of the reposeful Monk paled before the more enthusiastic holiness of the itinerant Friar. But during the intervening centuries, from the ninth to the thirteenth, all Western monks, from Poland to Portugal and from Cumberland to Calabria, looked with fond eyes of filial obedience and admiration to that Campanian hill on which their founder had fixed his home and of which a monastic Isaiah might have prophesied, 'From Cassino shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from the mountain of Benedict.'

Pope Gregory's biography of Saint Benedict.

The life of Saint Benedict was written in Latin by Pope Gregory the Great, whose birth-year was perhaps the same as the death-year of the Saint. Such a book, the biography of the greatest Monk, written by the greatest Pope (himself also a Monk), obtained of course a wide and enduring popularity in the West; and in

[1] See Guizot's History of Civilization in France: Lecture 15, ad fin.

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order that the East might share the benefit, a later pope, Zacharias, translated it into Greek. It is entitled 'The Life and Miracles of the Venerable Benedict, Founder and Abbot of the Monastery which is called (of) the Citadel of the Province of Campania[1].' As we might have expected from the title, supernatural events occupy a large place in the narrative, and we find ourselves at once confronted with one of those problems as to the growth of belief which so often perplex the historian of the Middle Ages. We have not here to deal with the mere romancing of some idle monk, manufacturing legends for the glory of his order about a saint who had been in his tomb for centuries. Pope Gregory was all but a contemporary of St. Benedict, and he professes to have derived his materials from four disciples and successors of the Saint, Constantine, Valentinian, Simplicius, and Honoratus. In these circumstances the merely mythical factor seems to be excluded from consideration; and there is something in the noble character of Gregory and of the friends of Benedict which makes a historian unwilling to adopt, unless under absolute compulsion, the theory of a 'pious fraud.' Yet probably not even the most absolutely surrendered intellect in the Catholic Church accepts *all* the marvels here recorded as literally and exactly true. It is useless to attempt to rationalise them down into the ordinary occurrences of everyday life. Yet in recounting them one would not wish to seem either to sneer or to believe. Our best course doubtless is to give them in Pope Gregory's own

[1] 'Vita et Miracula venerabilis Benedicti conditoris, vel Abbatis Monasterii, quod appellatur Arcis Provinciae Campaniae.' *Vel* is no doubt here equivalent to *et*, as so often in post-classical Latin.

words, studying them as phenomena of the age, and remembering that whatever was the actual substratum of fact, natural or supernatural, this which we find here recorded was what one of the greatest minds of the sixth century, the architect of the mediaeval Papacy and the restorer of the Christianity of Britain, either himself believed or wished to see believed by his disciples.

Benedict's birth-place.

In the high Sabine uplands, nearly two thousand feet above the sea-level, under the shadow of the soaring Monti Sibellini, which are among the highest peaks of the Apennine range, lies the little city of Norcia, known in Roman days as the *municipium* of Nursia[1], and familiar to diligent students of the Aeneid as 'frigida Nursia.' A little stranded city, apparently, in its sequestered Apennine valley: its nearest point of contact with the world of politics and of war would be Spoleto, about twenty miles to the west of it on the great Flaminian Way, and Spoleto was eighty miles from Rome. Here then in 'frigid Nursia,' about four years after Odovacar made himself supreme in Italy, was born to a noble Roman a son who received the prophetic name of Benedict, 'the blessed one.' He was sent as a boy to Rome to pursue his studies, and when there he probably saw the statues of Odovacar overthrown and the Forum placarded with the proclamations of the new ruler of Italy, Theodoric. But the young Nursian was thinking, not of the rise and fall of empires, but of the salvation of

Cir. 480.

Sent to Rome.

[1] Has this name any connection with that of the Etruscan goddess Nursia, so well known by Macaulay's lines—

'And hang round Nursia's altars
The golden shields of Rome'?

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his own soul. He was horrified by what he saw of the wickedness of the great city; he feared that if he became imbued with what there passed for wisdom he too should one day rush headlong into all its vices: he elected rather to be poor and ignorant, and decided on quitting Rome and assuming the garb of a monk. He set out for 'the desert,' that is, for the wild, thinly-peopled country by the upper waters of the Anio, and (pathetic evidence of the still tender years of the fervid anchorite) the faithful nurse who had come with him to Rome insisted on following him to his retirement.

Retires to the valley of the Anio.

At Efide.

Before they reached the actual mountain solitudes they came to the little town of Efide (the modern village of Affile), and there finding many devout men who listened with sympathy to his sorrows and aspirations, he yielded to their advice and consented to take up his abode near them, in some chamber attached to the church of St. Peter[1]. While he was dwelling here the first exhibition of his miraculous powers made him famous through all the surrounding district and drove him into yet deeper solitude. His faithful nurse had borrowed from some neighbours a sieve to sift some corn with, and this sieve, made not of wood but earthenware[2], had been carelessly left on the table, by a fall from which it was broken in two. The nurse wept over the broken implement, and the youthful saint, taking the fragments from her hand and retiring for prayer, found when he rose from his knees the

First miracle.

[1] 'Multisque honestioribus viris caritate se illic detinentibus, in beati Petri ecclesia demorarentur.' I presume that this means, as is stated above, some chamber under the same roof as the church.

[2] A sieve made of earthenware seems to us a very unhandy implement: but there seems to be no choice but thus to describe a 'capisterium' which could be also spoken of as a 'vas fractum.'

sieve so restored that no trace of the fracture could be discerned. So great was the admiration of the inhabitants at this marvel that they hung up the miraculous sieve at the entrance of the church, and there it remained for many years, till it perished, like many more precious treasures, in the waves of the Lombard invasion [1].

He withdraws to Subiaco.

The fame of this miracle brought to Benedict more visitors and more of the praise of this world than he could bear. His mind reverted to its original design, he determined to be absolutely unknown, and flying secretly from his nurse, he crossed the little ridge of hills which separates Affile from Subiaco and from the deep wild gorge of the Anio. Subiaco [2], the Sublacus or Sublaqueum of the Romans, derives its name from the lakes which had been formed there by Nero, whose stately villa was mirrored in those artificial waters. We have already had occasion to notice it in connection with the story of the Roman aqueducts. It was about three miles above the place where the turbid waters of the Anio Novus were diverted from the river-bed into the aqueduct which bore that name, and some twelve miles above the more serene and purer fountains of the Claudia and the Marcia. Situated about forty-four miles from Rome, in a precipitous and thickly-wooded valley, Sublaqueum was the sort of place which an artistic Emperor like Nero, who tried to make a solitude

[1] I have said that I do not propose to rationalise about these miracles: but it seems to me quite possible that here the preservation in the church porch of so humble a memorial of a great saint's residence at Efide has itself, without bad faith anywhere, given rise to the story of the miracle.

[2] As Subiaco was only 5½ miles from Affile, it is difficult to understand why St. Benedict was not followed by his friends.

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even round his golden house in Rome, might naturally resort to in the First Century, even as Popes made it the scene of their *villeggiatura* in later centuries, and even as artists from all countries now throng to it to transfer to their canvas the picturesque outlines of its rocks, its woods, and its castles. But during the convulsions of the Fifth Century, when wealthy pleasure-lovers were few, it might easily sink into solitude and decay: and hence no doubt it was that when Benedict, somewhere about the year 495, sought its recesses, a few rough peasants and some scattered anchorites formed its whole population, and his retirement thither could be spoken of by his biographer as a retreat into the desert.

Receives the monastic habit from Romanus.

Here he was met by a monk named Romanus, who, hearing of his desires after a solitary life, bestowed upon him the monastic habit and led him to a narrow cave at the foot of a hill, where the delicately nurtured youth spent the next three years, hidden from the eyes of all men, and with the place of his retreat known only to the faithful Romanus. This only friend dwelt in a monastery not far off[1], on the table-land overlooking the river. With pious theft he abstracted a small portion from each monastic meal, and on stated days hastened with his store to the brow of the hill. As no path led down to the cave of the recluse, the basket of provisions was tied to the end of a long rope, to which a bell was also attached, and thus the slowly-lowered vessel by its tinkling sound called the Saint from prayer to food. 'But one day the Ancient

Dwells for three years in a cave.

[1] 'Under the rule of Theodahad' or 'Adeodatus,' say the varying MSS. of Gregory: but neither rule seems to be known to ecclesiastical commentators.

Enemy [the Devil], envying the charity of one brother and the refreshment of the other, when he saw the rope lowered, threw a stone and broke the bell. Romanus, however, still continued to minister to him at the stated hours.'

His wants supplied by a distant Presbyter.

After a time, from some unexplained cause, the ministrations of Romanus ceased[1], and the Saint, insensible to the wants of the body, might easily have perished of hunger. But a certain Presbyter living a long way from Subiaco, having prepared for himself a hearty meal for the next day, the festival of Easter, saw the Lord in a night vision and heard Him say, 'While thou art preparing for thyself these delicacies, a servant of mine in a cavern near Sublaqueum is tortured with hunger.' The Presbyter rose at once and set off on that Easter morning with the provisions in his hand. Up hill and down dale he went, till at last, scrambling down the face of the precipice, he found the cave where dwelt the holy man. After they had prayed and talked together for some time the Presbyter said to the Hermit, 'Rise and let us eat: to-day is Easter-day.' Benedict, who in his solitude and his perpetual fastings had long lost count of Lent and Easter-tide, said, 'An Easter-day to me truly, since I have been allowed to look upon thy face.' The other answered, 'In very truth this is the Easter-day, the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, upon which it becomes thee not to keep fast. Eat then, for therefore am I sent, that we may share together the gifts of the

[1] St. Gregory's words might suggest the idea that Romanus died at this time: 'Cum vero jam omnipotens Deus et Romanum vellet a labore quiescere, et Benedicti vitam in exemplum hominibus demonstrare.' But in the Life of St. Maurus by Faustus, Romanus is represented as outliving Benedict.

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Lord Almighty.' So they ate and drank together, and after long converse the Presbyter departed.

The shepherds bring him food.

It was soon after this that some shepherds of the neighbourhood discovered the cave, and found what they at first supposed to be a wild beast coiled up among the bushes. When they found that a man, and a holy man, was enveloped in that garment of skins, they listened eagerly to his preaching: and from this time forward he was never left in want of food, one or other of the shepherds bringing him such victuals as he needed, and receiving in return, from his lips, the message of eternal life.

The temptation.

After the unnatural calm and utter absorption in the contemplation of heavenly things which had marked the Saint's first sojourn in the cave, there came a storm of terrible temptation. In those years of abstraction the dreamy child had grown into a man, with the hot blood of Italy in his veins; and his imprisoned and buffeted manhood struggled hard for victory. Soft bird-like voices sounded in his ears, the form of a beautiful woman rose before his eyes, everything conspired to tempt him back from that dreary solitude into the sweet world which he had quitted before he knew of its delights. He had all but yielded to the temptation, he had all but turned his back upon the desert, when a sudden thrill of emotion recalled him to his old resolve. Bent on punishing the rebellious body which had so nearly conquered the soul, he plunged naked into a dense thicket of thorns and nettles, and rolled himself in them till all his skin was torn and smarting. The pain of the body relieved the anguish of the soul, and, according to the lovely poetical fancy of after ages,

when seven centuries later his great imitator St. Francis visited the spot, the thorns which had been the instrument of St. Benedict's penance were miraculously turned to roses [1].

Benedict's maturer judgment concerning his youthful austerities.

From a hint which the Saint himself has given us, we may infer that his own mature judgment condemned his early impetuosity in facing while yet a boy the hardships and temptations of an anchorite's life in the wilderness. He says in the first chapter of his Rule, 'Hermits are' [by which he evidently means 'should be'] 'men who are not in the first fervour of their noviciate, but who having first learned by a long course of monastic discipline and by the assistance of many brethren how to fight against the Devil, afterwards step forth alone from the ranks of their brethren to engage him in single combat, God himself being their aid against the sins of the flesh and thoughts of evil [2].'

Made abbot of the convent of Varia.

The fame of the young Saint was now spread abroad throughout the valley, and the inmates of the convent of Varia [3] (now Vicovaro), about twenty miles lower down the stream, having lost their abbot by death, besought Benedict to come and preside over them. Long he refused, feeling sure that his ways of thinking and acting would never agree with theirs. For these monks evidently belonged to that class which he in after days [4] described as 'the evil brood of the Sara-

[1] The descendants of which roses are still to be seen in the convent garden.

[2] This metaphor of warriors fighting single-handed in front of an army is well illustrated by the stories in Procopius of similar combats between Gothic and Roman champions.

[3] Gregory does not mention the name of the convent, but tradition identifies it with Varia.

[4] Regula, cap. i.

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baitae.' This name, of Egyptian origin, denoted those who had turned back[1] from the rigour of their monastic profession while still wearing the monastic garb. 'Their law,' as he said, 'is the gratification of their own desires. Whatever they take a fancy to they call holy: the unlawful is that to which they feel no temptation[2].'

The monks rebel against his rule.

These men, in a temporary fit of penitence and desire after better things, chose Benedict for their Abbot, and he at length yielded to their will. But soon the passion for reform died away. They found it intolerable to be reprimanded at each little deviation to the right hand or to the left from the path of ascetic virtue. Angry words were bandied about in whispers, as each accused the other of having counselled the mad design of making this austere recluse from the wilderness their Abbot. At length their discontent reached such a height that they resolved on poisoning him. When the cup containing the deadly draught was offered to the reclining Abbot[3] he, according to monastic usage, made the sign of the cross in act of benediction. The moment that the holy sign was made, as if a stone had fallen from his hands, the cup was shivered to pieces and the wine was spilt on the ground. Perceiving at once the meaning of the miracle, Benedict arose and addressed the pallid monks with serene countenance: 'Almighty God pity you, my brethren. Why have ye designed this wickedness

They attempt to poison Benedict.

[1] 'Sarabaitae id est renuitae qui jugum regularis disciplinae renuunt'; Odo of Clugny, quoted in the Notes to the Regula, p. 254 (ed. Migne).

[2] The same sentiment is expressed in two well-known lines of Hudibras.

[3] 'Recumbenti Patri:' probably reclining for his siesta.

against me? Said I not unto you that my ways and yours could never agree? Go and seek an Abbot after your own heart, for me ye shall see here no more.' And with that he arose and returned to the wilderness.

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He returns to the wilderness.

But Benedict's fame was now so far spread abroad that it was impossible for him any longer to lead the life of an absolutely solitary recluse. During the first twenty years of the sixth century, men anxious to commence the monastic career under his training were flocking to him from all parts of Italy. So numerous were these that he established no fewer than twelve monasteries in the neighbourhood of Subiaco; to each of which he assigned a superior, chosen from among his intimate friends. While probably exercising a general superintendence over all these religious houses, he himself dwelt with a few of his friends in a small house reared above his cave, the predecessor of the present *Convento del Sacro Speco* at Subiaco[1].

He founds monasteries at Subiaco. 501–520.

Now too the nobles of Rome began to bring him their sons for education, and for dedication, if they should still after needful probation desire it, to the untroubled life of a coenobite. The most celebrated among these noble novices were Maurus and Placidus, sons of Aequitius and the Patrician Tertullus. They came about the year 523, Placidus a mere child, Maurus a bright, earnest lad, already able to enter into some of the thoughts of his revered master and to be the instrument of his rule over the brethren. In the splendid series of frescoes by Signorelli and

St. Maurus and St. Placidus.

523.

[1] I have ventured here to give a slight conjectural expansion to the words of Gregory, which do not very clearly indicate *where* Benedict and his intimate friends dwelt.

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Sodoma which line the cloisters of the great Benedictine monastery of Monte Oliveto[1], none is more interesting than that which depicts the arrival of young Maurus and Placidus, brought by their fathers, richly dressed and with a long train of horses and servants and all the state of a Roman noble as imagined by a mediaeval painter. Almost pathetic are the immediately following pictures, in which the little heads are already marked with the tonsure and the youthful faces already wear an aspect of too reposeful, unboyish holiness[1].

Miracle of the rescue of Placidus.

One of the most noteworthy and perplexing miracles of the Saint is connected with these, his young disciples. One day the little Placidus having gone to draw water from the neighbouring lake, stooping too far forward fell in and was swept by the swift current far from the shore. Benedict, who was praying in his cell, suddenly called out, 'Brother Maurus! run! That child has fallen into the water and is being carried away by the stream.' Maurus asked and received a hurried blessing, hastened to the margin of the lake, ran over its surface with rapid course, not perceiving that he trod on water, pulled his companion up by the hair, and hastily returned. When he had reached the shore he looked back over the lake and then saw for the first time, with trembling, what he had done. He returned and related the event to Benedict. 'It is a miracle,' said

[1] About fifteen miles S.E. of Siena.

[2] The name of Maurus—who was the great missionary of Benedictinism in France—is borne by the great ducal house of Seymour (= St. Maur), while Benedict is of course represented by the Bennet (Lord Arlington) of the Cabal ministry of Charles II and the numerous Bennets and Bennetts of England and America.

he, 'granted to thee as a reward of thy prompt obedience.' 'Not so,' said the youth, 'it is a miracle wrought by thy prayers.' The friendly controversy was settled by the testimony of the rescued Placidus, who declared that when he was being drawn out of the water he saw the hood of Benedict waving above him, and felt that it was by Benedict's arm that he was delivered.

Machinations of the priest Florentius.

The rivalry between the monks and the parish priests, between the regular and the secular clergy, as they were afterwards called, which was to reappear in so many forms in after ages, already began to show itself. Florentius, the priest of a neighbouring church[1], filled with jealousy at the increasing fame and influence of the Saint, endeavoured by slander and misrepresentation to draw away his disciples from following him. As years went on and still the fame of Benedict increased, while Florentius remained obscure, the character of the priest underwent an evil change, and from slanderous words he proceeded to murderous deeds. He sent, according to a not uncommon custom, a piece of bread to Benedict as a token of brotherhood[2]. The morsel was, however, a poisoned one, or at least the Saint believed it to be so, though, as he commanded a crow which was accustomed to feed out of his hand to bear it away into a desert place and there deposit it where it could be found

[1] 'Grandfather of this Florentius, who is our sub-deacon,' says Gregory, in one of those little touches which give vividness and an impression of truthfulness to his narrative.

[2] 'Quasi pro benedictione.' Benedictio has a technical meaning which I have tried to render above. In cap. xxxi, where the Goth Zalla is brought into the monastery 'ut benedictionem acciperet,' the Greek version has ὅπως μεταλάβῃ τροφῆς.

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of no man, it is difficult to see what evidence existed of the wicked designs of Florentius. The next step taken by the priest, who sent seven women of evil life to the monks' cells, was so outrageous and threatened such ruin to the community if this was to be the permitted manner of warfare, that Benedict resolved to withdraw from the conflict, and, leaving his twelve monasteries under the rule of their respective heads, sought a new home for himself and his chosen friends fifty miles to the southward, in the countries watered by the Liris. We may fairly conjecture that the enmity of Florentius was not the sole cause that urged him to this migration. His was one of those characters which require solitude, leisure, liberty, in order to attain their true development. At Subiaco he found himself no longer a recluse, but the centre of a great system of administration, his name a battle-cry, himself the leader of a party. Leaving those to strive and conquer who would, he bowed his head to the storm and again sought the freedom of the desert.

Benedict resolves to leave Subiaco: circa 528.

Scarcely, however, had he started on his southward journey when a messenger from the faithful Maurus reached him with the tidings of the death of his enemy. The balcony on which Florentius was standing, to watch and to gloat over the departure of his foe, had given way, and the wicked priest had been killed by his fall. Benedict burst into loud lamentations over his death, inflicted penance on the messenger, who seemed to exult in the tidings which he bore, and continued his journey towards the Campanian lands. Evidently the enmity of Florentius, though it might be one cause, was not the sole cause of the great migration.

Death of Florentius.

The new home of the Father of Monks was erected upon a promontory of high table-land, just upon the confines of Latium and Campania, which then overlooked the Via Latina, as it now overlooks the modern railway between Rome and Naples, from a point a little nearer to the latter city than to the former. Here, 'round the Citadel of Campania,' grew the shady groves in which, two hundred years after Constantine, a rustic multitude, still, after the manner of their forefathers, offered their pagan sacrifices to the statue of Apollo. At the command of Benedict the statue was ground to powder, the woods were cut down, and where the altar of the far-darting god had stood, there rose, amid much opposition from unseen and hellish foes, two chapels to St. Martin and St. John, and, hard by, the new dwelling of the Coenobites. It was a memorable event in the history of the valley of the Liris, which turned the obscure *Castrum Casinum* into the world-renowned, the thought-moulding, the venerated monastery of Monte Cassino[1]. BOOK V. CH. 16. Monte Cassino.

The migration from the Anio to the Liris occurred about 528, and fifteen years were passed by the Saint in his new 'citadel'-home. The record of these years, as of those passed at Subiaco, is chiefly a record of miracles. Some of the chief characteristics of this miraculous history may be here briefly touched upon. Life at Monte Cassino, 528–543.

[1] Here is St. Gregory's own description of the place which was so dear to him: 'Castrum namque quod Casinum dicitur in excelsi montis latere situm est, qui videlicet mons distenso sinu hoc idem Castrum recipit, sed per tria millia in altum se subrigens, velut ad aera cacumen tendit: ubi vetustissimum fanum fuit, in quo ex antiquorum more gentilium, a stulto rusticorum populo, Apollo colebatur.'

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Miracles of St. Benedict. Resemblances to those of the Hebrew prophets.

Least interesting to us, because most obviously artificial in their character, are those wonders recorded of the Saint in which there is an obvious desire to emulate the miraculous deeds of Elijah and Elisha. When Benedict goes forth into the fields with his disciples to work, and by his prayers restores the dead son of a peasant to life[1]; when he heals a leper[2]; when a miraculous supply of oil bubbles up in the cask and runs over on the convent floor[3]; when he provides the monks of Subiaco with an easily-accessible spring of sweet water[4], we feel that, whether to the Saint himself or to his biographers, the idea of these supernatural occurrences was suggested by what they had read in the Books of Kings.

Contests with the Evil One.

Childish as some of them may seem to us, there is a greater psychological interest in those stories which describe the Saint as struggling for victory against the wiles and stratagems of the Devil. The Power of Evil is almost uniformly spoken of by Gregory as 'the Ancient Enemy' (antiquus hostis), and the minute acquaintance which is shown with his works and ways, the comparative ease with which his plots are foiled and himself brought to confusion, remind us rather of the way in which a hostile politician is spoken of by the admirers of his rival than of the dark and trembling hints dropped in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures concerning the mysterious Being who for ever sets his will against the will of the Most High. When the monastery

[1] Cap. xxxii. Comp. 1 Kings xvii and 2 Kings iv.

[2] Cap. xxvi. Comp. 2 Kings v.

[3] Cap. xxix. Comp. 1 Kings xvii and 2 Kings iv.

[4] Cap. v. Comp. 2 Kings ii. 19–22.

was being built at Cassino hard by the old idolatrous grove, the 'antiquus hostis' continually appeared to the fathers in their dreams; he filled the air with his lamentations; he once stood in bodily presence before the Saint, with flaming eyes, calling 'Benedict! Benedict!' and when he refused to answer, cried out 'Maledict! not Benedict! what hast thou to do with me? Why wilt thou thus persecute me?' A stone which the builders wished to raise to its place in the new building was made immovable to all their efforts by reason of the Ancient Enemy sitting upon it, till Benedict by his prayers caused him to depart. The kitchen of the monastery appeared to the brethren to be on fire, and the work of building was interrupted by their causeless panic, till again by the prayers of the Saint their eyes were opened, and they saw that the imagined fire was no fire at all, but only a figment of the Ancient Enemy. At one time the Enemy appeared in the strange guise of a veterinary surgeon[1], and, visiting one of the monks who was drawing water, afflicted him with some strange disorder of a hysterical kind, which was cured by a sharp buffet from the hand of Benedict. At another time a monk was afflicted with an unaccountable love of roving, which always led him to go forth from the monastery just when the brethren were engaged in prayer. Admonitions from his own abbot (for he was not under the immediate supervision of Benedict) were in vain. The Saint, being sent for to heal him, clearly perceived a little black boy tugging at the fringe of the monk's habit, and thus

[1] 'Ei antiquus hostis in Mulo-medici specie obviam factus est, cornu et tripedicam ferens' (cap. xxx).

coaxing him to leave the chapel. The Saint saw it, and on the following day his friend Maurus also saw it; but to the eyes of Pompeianus, abbot of the monastery, the black imp remained invisible. Sharp strokes of the rod corrected the wandering spirit of the monk, who thenceforward sat quietly in the chapel to the end of the service.

The Mediaeval Satan.

We are here, manifestly, in presence of the Mediaeval figure of the Devil. This is the being who, according to the belief of the Middle Ages, furnished the design for the Bridge of St. Gotthard and for the Cathedral of Cologne; the being who is always on the point of outwitting, but is generally in the end outwitted by, the sons of men; the being at whom Luther, monk in heart if reformer in brain, threw his inkstand when he sat in the little chamber at the Wartburg. Are we not justified in saying that this conception of the character of man's unseen Foe has more than an accidental connection with the monastic system with whose birth it is contemporaneous? Assuredly those protracted fasts, those long and lonely vigils of anchorite and coenobite, had something to do with bringing the Devil of the Middle Ages into the field of human imaginings.

Social conditions of the times.

Some of the stories recounted of the Saint bring vividly before us the social conditions of the age in which he lived, conditions of which probably no one had a wider or more accurate knowledge than the Superior of a great Monastery. Into that safe fold came men from all ranks and all stations in life, the lofty and the lowly, some seeking shelter, some solace, some rest from the hopeless distractions of a turbulent age; and the spiritual father was bound to listen to the

tale of each, to sympathise with the sorrows of all. St. Benedict himself in his rule[1], while insisting on the duty of the abbot's avoiding all respect of persons, hints at the difficulty of its fulfilment. 'Let good deeds and obedience be the only means of obtaining the abbot's favour. Let not the free-born man be preferred to him who was a slave before he entered the convent, unless there be some other reason for the preference[2].' Distinguished merit may lead to promotion out of the order of seniority, 'but if otherwise, let each keep his proper place [in that order], since, whether slaves or free, we are all one in Christ, and, under the same Lord, wear all of us the same badge of service.'

Blending of nationalities and ranks in the monastery. The noble ladies.

In St. Benedict's case, Goth[3] and Roman, peasant and noble, the son of the tax-ridden *Curialis*[4] and the son of the lordly *Defensor*[5], were all subject to his equal sway. Near to his monastery, and in some measure subject to his oversight, dwelt two noble

[1] Cap. ii: 'Qualis debeat esse Abbas.'

[2] 'Non ab eo persona in monasterio discernatur. . . . Non praeponatur ingenuus ex servitio convertenti, nisi alia rationabilis causa existat.'

[3] Cap. vi: 'Gothus quidam pauper spiritu ad conversionem venit.' This Goth, when cutting down some briars near the edge of the lake, let the iron of his reaping-hook fall into the water. The Saint sent the handle after the hook and the iron rose from the depths of the lake to join the wood. The Goth received his sickle again and was comforted.

[4] It was 'cujusdam curialis filius' who was injured by the fall of a wall, overturned by the Ancient Enemy, when the convent of Cassino was building, and who, being laid on the mat on which the Saint was wont to pray, was healed by his intercessions; cap. xi.

[5] For the condition of the *Curialis* see vol. ii. 576–596; for *Defensor*, vol. i. 625–628.

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ladies who had vowed themselves to a life of holiness[1]. A monk, of lower social condition, who performed menial offices for these ladies, was often vexed by the sharp words which they used towards him, mindful rather of the past difference in their positions, than of their present equality in Christ. On hearing the good man's complaints St. Benedict visited the ladies, and told them that if they did not keep their tongues in better subjection he should be compelled to excommunicate them. Peevish and froward, however, and probably suffering in health by reason of the change from a palace to a cell, the noble ladies abated none of their scolding words. In no long time they both died, and were buried within the precincts of the church. Then a strange sight was seen by their nurse, when she attended, according to custom, to bring an oblation for her dead mistresses, at the solemnisation of the mass. When the Deacon called out 'Let all who do not communicate depart,' two dim figures were seen to rise out of the floor and steal away from the sacred building. Seeing this happen more than once, and remembering the threatened excommunication of the Saint, which evidently had power beyond the limits of this life, the faithful nurse sought the cell of Benedict and told him the marvellous tale. He gave her an oblation from his own hand to offer on their behalf, in proof that he no longer excommunicated them. The oblation was duly made, and thereafter the souls of the harassed harassers had peace[2].

Once, at evening, the venerable Father was sitting

[1] 'Sanctimoniales foeminae' is the term usually employed by Gregory for nuns.

[2] Cap. xxiii.

The son of the Defensor.

at table, partaking of the bread and cooked vegetables which formed his frugal repast. Opposite him, according to the rule of the monastery, stood a young monk, holding the lamp and ready to do the Abbot's bidding. It chanced that he who upon this evening performed this lowly duty was a young noble, son of one of the Imperial Defensors, whose father therefore was one of the most important personages in the state. Suddenly the thought flashed through his mind, 'Who is this man who sits here eating his evening meal, upon whom I am waiting like a slave, holding the lamp, handing him the dishes? And what am I, I the Defensor's son, that I should condescend to such drudgery?' Not a word did the young noble utter, but the Saint, who read his proud thoughts, said suddenly, with voice of stern rebuke, 'Seal up thy heart, my brother. What is that which thou art saying? Seal up thy heart.' He called in the other brethren, bade the young man hand the lamp to them and retire for an hour of silent meditation. The monks afterwards asked the culprit what he had done to awaken such wrath in the Saint's mind. He told them, not what he had done, but what he had thought; and they all recognised that nothing could escape the venerable Benedict, in whose ear men's thoughts sounded like spoken words [1].

Benedict's power of reading the thoughts of others.

Whatsoever among the miracles attributed to the founder of Cassino we may feel bound to reject, we can hardly refuse to him an extraordinary, perhaps a supernatural power of reading the human heart. The story just told is one of the most striking instances of this power. Other cases are recorded, as when he

[1] Cap. xx.

BOOK V. CH. 16.

rebuked some monks who, contrary to the rule, had partaken of refreshment in a religious woman's house, outside of the monastery[1],—when he reminded another monk of an offence which he had himself forgotten, the acceptance of some handkerchiefs from the inmates of a nunnery to whom he had been sent to preach[2],—or when he detected the dishonesty of a young monk who, when entrusted with two bottles of wine for the use of the monastery, had delivered one only[3].

Interview with Totila.

This power of penetrating the secret thoughts of those who came into his presence was remarkably exemplified in St. Benedict's interview with Totila; an interview which took place, probably, in the year 542, when the Gothic King was on his march to the siege of Naples. Pope Gregory, as the champion of orthodoxy and of the Roman nationality, naturally represents the Arian and barbarian King somewhat less favourably than he deserves. Still, even in the Papal narrative (which it will be well to give in a literal translation), something of the nobleness of Totila's character may be discerned.

'Chapter xiv. How the feigning of King Totila was discovered.

'In the times of the Goths, Totila their King having heard that the holy man possessed the spirit of prophecy, and being on his way to the monastery halted

[1] Cap. xii (and cap. xiii). [2] Cap. xix.

[3] Cap. xviii. In this case the Saint received one bottle with thanks, and said to the departing messenger: 'Take care, my son, that thou dost not drink of that other bottle which thou hast hidden, but incline it carefully and see what is therein.' The youth, when he had left St. Benedict's presence, uncorked the bottle, held it up gently, and behold! a serpent crept out of it.

at some distance and sent word that he would come to him. Having sent this message, as he was a man of unbelieving mind, he determined to try whether the man of God really possessed the prophetic spirit. There was a certain sword-bearer of his, named Riggo, to whom he lent his [purple] buskins and ordered him to put on the royal robes and to go, personating him, to the man of God. To aid the deception he also sent three counts, who before all others were wont to attend upon his person, namely Vuld [or Vultheric], Ruderic, and Blidi[1]. These were to keep close by the side of Riggo, to whom he assigned other guards and other marks of honour, with the intention that by these and by the purple raiment he might be taken for the King. When this same Riggo, thus arrayed and thus accompanied, had entered the monastery, the man of God was sitting afar off. But seeing him coming, as soon as his voice could be heard he cried out, saying, "Put off, my son, put off that which thou wearest; it is not thine." Thereat Riggo fell straightway to the earth, struck with terror because he had presumed to mock so great a man; and all who had come with him to the man of God grovelled on the ground. Then arising, they did not dare to approach, but hurrying back to their King told him how speedily they had been detected.'

'Chapter xv. Of the Prophecy which was made concerning the same King.

'Then, in his own person, the same Totila approached the man of God, but when he saw him sitting afar off

[1] Ruderic and Blidi are probably the same persons as the Roderic and Bleda who, as Procopius tells us, were sent to besiege Florence (p. 396 n. 2). This is an interesting coincidence, as we have no reason to suppose that Gregory I, unacquainted as he was with Greek, knew what had been written by Procopius.

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he did not dare to come close, but cast himself upon the ground. Then, when the man of God had twice or thrice said to him, "Rise," but still he did not dare to raise himself from the earth, Benedict the servant of Jesus Christ condescended himself to approach the prostrate King and cause him to arise. He rebuked him for his past deeds, and in few words told him all that should come to pass, saying,

"Much evil hast thou done,
Much evil art thou doing.
Now at length cease from sin.
Thou shalt enter Rome:
Thou shalt cross the sea.
Nine years shalt thou reign,
In the tenth shalt thou die."

When he had heard these words, the King, vehemently terrified, asked for his prayers and withdrew; and from that time forward he was less cruel than aforetime. Not long afterwards he entered Rome, and crossed to Sicily. But in the tenth year of his reign, by the judgment of Almighty God, he lost his kingdom with his life.

'Moreover, the priest of the church of Canusium was sent to visit the same servant of God, by whom, for his meritorious life, he was held in great affection. And once when they were talking together concerning the entry of King Totila and the destruction of the city of Rome, the priest said, "By this King that city will be destroyed so that it shall be no more inhabited." To whom the man of God made answer, "Rome shall not be exterminated by the barbarians [1], but, wearied with tempests, lightnings, whirlwinds, and earthquakes,

[1] 'A gentibus non exterminabitur.'

it shall consume away in itself[1].” The mysteries of which prophecy are now made clearer than the daylight to us, who see in this city walls shattered, houses thrown down, churches destroyed by the whirlwind, and the great edifices of the city loosened by long old age falling around us in abounding ruin.' So far Pope Gregory. BOOK V. CH. 16.

These two scenes, the unmasking of the false King and the prediction of the future fortunes of the true one, are vividly pourtrayed, not only by Signorelli at Monte Oliveto, but also by Spinello Aretino on the walls of the large square sacristy at San Miniato. Especially well rendered is the dismay of the detected impostor. Riggo's knees are loosened with terror, and he turns sick with fear as he meets the stern mildness of Benedict's gaze and hears that voice of command, 'My son, put off, put off that which thou wearest, for it is not thine.'

Within a year, probably, from the interview with 543.
Totila, St. Benedict was dead[2]. The little that has got to be told about him is a history of farewells. First came the death of his sister Scholastica. She had been from infancy dedicated to the service of God, and had apparently inhabited a cell not far from his monastery, first at Subiaco and then at Monte Cassino[3].

Death of Scholastica, sister of Benedict.

[1] 'Marcescet in semetipsa.'

[2] There is a long controversy as to the year of the Saint's death, into which it is not necessary here to enter. Possibly he may have lived for some years after 543.

[3] The convent now called after St. Scholastica at Subiaco is near the site of Nero's Villa and about a mile from the *Convento del Sacro Speco.* Her abode in Campania is said to have been the convent of Plumbariola, about a mile and a half distant from Monte Cassino.

Once a year the Saint used to come and visit his sister in her cell, which, though of course outside the gates of the monastery, was within the limits of the modest monastic estate. When the time for the last yearly visit was come, Benedict with a little knot of his disciples went down to his sister's cell and spent the whole day in religious conversation and in singing with her the praises of the Most High. The evening was come; they were seated at supper; it was time for Benedict to depart, but still the stream of conversation, which perhaps deviated sometimes from the near joys of heaven to the far distant past of their common infancy in upland Nursia, seemed unexhausted. Scholastica pressed her brother to stay that they might on the morrow resume their celestial converse. 'What dost thou ask me, my sister?' said he; 'I can by no means pass the night outside of my cell.' At this time the evening sky was bright and clear, and not a cloud was visible. Scholastica clasped her hands tightly together and bowed her head in silent prayer. After a time she looked up again. The lightning was flashing, the thunder was pealing, and such torrents of rain were descending, that neither Benedict nor his companions could stir across the threshold of the cell. 'Almighty God have pity on thee!' said Benedict. 'What is this that thou hast done?' 'My brother,' she answered, 'I asked thee and thou wouldest not hear. Then I asked my Lord, and he heard me. Now depart if thou canst: leave me alone and return to thy monastery.' Benedict recognised and bowed to the divine answer to prayer. He passed the night in his sister's cell, and they cheered one another with alternate speech upon the joys of the spiritual life. In the

morning he departed to his own cell, and three days after, when he was standing therein, lifting up his eyes he saw a white dove rising into the sky. Then he knew that his sister Scholastica was dead, and sent some of the brotherhood to bring her body and lay it in the prepared sepulchre, where it should wait a little season for his own [1].

The heavenly vision. Death of Germanus of Capua.

It was not long, apparently, after this event that the Saint received a visit from his dear friend Servandus, the head of a neighbouring monastery founded by Liberius the Patrician, probably the same with whom we have already made acquaintance as the faithful servant of Odovacar and Theodoric [2]. After spending the evening in that kind of conversation which was the highest mental enjoyment of these venerable men, they retired to rest, Benedict in the topmost chamber of a tall tower overlooking all the buildings and courtyards of the monastery, his guest in a lower story of the same tower, the disciples of both below. Benedict rose, while all others still slept, before the appointed hour of vigils (two o'clock in the morning). While he stood at his window and looked south-eastwards over the Campanian plain, suddenly the darkness of the night was scattered; a radiance as of the sun filled the deep Italian sky, and under that strangely flashing light it seemed to him that the world was made visible as it

[1] That Scholastica's death happened only a short time before her brother's is not expressly stated, but the whole course of the narrative implies it. Apparently the 10th February is fixed for the former event, and 21st March for the latter, by ecclesiastical writers.

[2] But possibly the later Liberius, who was sent by Theodahad as ambassador to Constantinople in 535, and who held an Imperial command in the later years of the Gothic war.

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was to Christ upon the Specular Mount, all illumined by one ray only from the sun[1]. While he was still fixing his earnest gaze on that heavenly radiance, behold a sphere of fire, in which he saw the soul of his friend Germanus, Bishop of Capua, being borne by angels to heaven. Thrice with a loud voice he called on Servandus, sleeping below, to arise and see the marvel: but when Servandus stood beside his friend at the window, the fiery sphere had vanished, the vision of the world was ended, and only

'The few last rays of that far-scattered light'

were yet discernible. St. Benedict sent a brother at once to Capua to enquire as to the welfare of the Bishop, and learned that on that same night, at the very moment of the heavenly vision, Germanus had given up the ghost.

Premonitions of the end.

And now did Benedict's discourse often turn upon his own approaching end, telling those about him under the seal of confidence when it should be, and sending word to his absent disciples by what signs they should be made certain of his decease. Six days before his death he ordered his grave to be dug. After this he was seized with a sharp attack of fever, which grew daily more severe. On the sixth day he bade his disciples carry him into the oratory, fortified himself for death by receiving the body and blood of

Death of Benedict.

[1] 'Mira autem res valde in hac speculatione secuta est: quia, sicut post ipse narravit, omnis etiam mundus velut sub uno solis radio collectus ante oculos ejus adductus est.' The 'sub uno solis radio' is much insisted on by Gregory himself and by his commentators: but it does not seem to add great vividness to the picture. The words 'showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,' impress the imagination more forcibly.

the Lord, and then, leaning his weak limbs upon the arms of his disciples, he stood with his hands upraised to heaven, and thus passed away in the act and attitude of prayer[1].

Visions of the heavenly pathway.

That same day two of his disciples, one in his cell at Monte Cassino and another in a distant monastery, saw the same vision. To each it seemed that a pathway strewn with bright robes and gleaming with innumerable fires stretched eastwards from Benedict's cell and upwards into the depth of heaven[2]. Above stood a man of venerable aspect and radiant countenance, who asked them if they knew what that pathway was which they beheld. They answered, 'No;' and he replied, 'This is the path by which Benedict, beloved of God, hath ascended up to heaven.'

Burial.

He was buried side by side with his sister in the place where he had overthrown the altar of Apollo, and within the walls of the new oratory of St. John.

[1] In this passage, as in all which deal with religious ideas, I have endeavoured to keep as close as possible to the words of the original: 'Exitum suum Dominici corporis et sanguinis perceptione munivit, atque inter discipulorum manus imbecillia membra sustentans erectis in caelum manibus stetit et ultimum spiritum inter verba orationis efflavit.'

[2] 'Viderunt namque quia strata palliis, atque innumeris corusca lampadibus via, recto Orientis tramite, ab ejus cella in caelum usque tendebatur.' Compare the well-known verse in Tennyson's 'St. Agnes' Eve':—

'He lifts me to the golden doors,
  The flashes come and go,
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
  And strows her lights below;
And deepens on and up! the gates
  Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits
  To make me pure of sin.'

BOOK V. Ch. 16.

St. Benedict's Rule the reason of his surpassing fame.

Returning now to the line of thought indicated at the beginning of this chapter, if we ask why has the fame of St. Benedict so entirely eclipsed that of all other Western monks, the answer is undoubtedly furnished to us by the one literary product of his life, his *Regula*. This Rule, extending only to seventy-three short chapters (many of them very short), and not probably designed by its author for use much beyond the bounds of the communities under his own immediate supervision, proved to be the thing which the world of religious and thoughtful men was then longing for, a complete code of monastic duty. Thus by a strange parallelism, almost in the very year when the great Emperor Justinian was codifying the results of seven centuries of Roman secular legislation for the benefit of the judges and the statesmen of the new Europe, St. Benedict on his lonely mountain-top was unconsciously composing *his* code for the regulation of the daily life of the great civilisers of Europe for seven centuries to come. The chief principles of that code were labour, obedience, and a regulated fervour of devotion to the Most High. The life prescribed therein, which seems to us so austere, so awfully remote from the common needs and the common pleasures of humanity, seemed to him, and was in reality, gentle and easy when compared with the anchorite's wild endeavours after an impossible holiness, endeavours which had often culminated in absolute madness, or broken down into mere worldliness and despair of all good. It is therefore in no spirit of affectation that Benedict in his Preface to the Rules uses these remarkable words: 'We must therefore establish a school of service to our Lord, in which institution we

trust that nothing rough and nothing grievous will be found to have been ordained by us[1].' BOOK V. CH. 16.

It is, however, the man himself rather than the vast system almost unconsciously founded by him that it has seemed necessary at this point to bring before the mind of the reader. St. Benedict died only ten years before the extreme limit of time reached by this volume. Later on, when we have to deal with the history of the Lombard domination in Italy, our attention will be attracted to the further fortunes of Monte Cassino, ruined, restored, endowed with vast wealth, all by the same Lombard conquerors. For the present we leave the followers of the Saint engaged in their holy and useful labours, praying, digging, transcribing[2]. 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.' The *scriptorium* of the Benedictine monastery will multiply copies not only of missals and theological treatises, but of the poems and histories of antiquity. Whatever may have been the religious value or the religious dangers of the monastic life, the historian at least is bound to express his gratitude to these men, without whose life-long toil the great deeds and thoughts of Greece and Rome might have been as completely lost to us as the wars of the buried Lake-dwellers or the thoughts of Palaeolithic Man. To take an illustration from St. Benedict's own beloved Subiaco, the work of his disciples has been like one of the great aqueducts of the valley of the Anio,—sometimes carried

[1] 'Constituenda est ergo a nobis dominici schola servitii, in qua institutione nihil asperum, nihilque grave nos constituros speramus.'

[2] The work of transcription began as soon as the influence of Cassiodorus had made itself felt.

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underground for centuries through the obscurity of unremembered existences, sometimes emerging to the daylight and borne high upon the arcade of noble lives, but equally through all its course bearing the precious stream of ancient thought from the far-off hills of time into the humming and crowded cities of modern civilisation.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RETURN OF BELISARIUS.

Authority.

Sources:—

For the private life of Belisarius, the Anecdota or Historia Arcana of PROCOPIUS, cap. iv (pp. 30–36). As before said, this book, though almost certainly a genuine work of Procopius, must be used with caution on account of the tone of rancorous hostility to Antonina and Theodora and their husbands, which pervades the whole of it. BOOK V. CH. 17.

For the plague at Constantinople (542), the De Bello Persico of the same author, ii. 22–23 (pp. 249–259).

AT the point where we left the narrative of the fight for the possession of Italy the struggle had been proceeding for nine years. We had reached the spring months of 544. Totila, in the two years and a-half of his kingship, had beaten the Imperial generals in two pitched battles by land, and in one engagement by sea had opened to himself the Flaminian Way by the capture of Petra Pertusa, could march freely from one end of Italy to the other, had taken Naples and Benevento, and was threatening the southern port of Otranto. The Roman generals, without concert or courage or care for their master's interests, were shut up in Rome, in Ravenna, in Spoleto, and a few other still untaken strongholds, more intent on plundering

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the wretched Italians than on defending the Imperial cause.

Justinian decides to send back Belisarius to Italy.

At this point of the struggle the Emperor, with a heavy heart, recognised the truth of what all his subjects had doubtless for many months been saying, that the only hope of saving any part of his Italian conquests lay in employing the man who had first effected them. Belisarius, now no longer Master of the Soldiery, but only Count of the Sacred Stable, was to be relieved from the comparatively useless work of superintending the Imperial stud and sent to reconquer Italy.

The unhappiness of Belisarius.

But the Belisarius who came back to the peninsula in 544 to measure swords with Totila was a different man from the triumphant and popular hero who had sailed away from Ravenna in the spring of the year 540. First came the certainty of Antonina's unfaithfulness, the attempt to punish her, the sacrifice of his brave helper Photius, the unworthy and hollow show of reconciliation forced upon him by the imperious Theodora; a reconciliation which left husband and wife still strangers to one another, rival and hostile powers though dwelling in the same palace. These events, the bitter fruit of the year 541, had already
542. aged and saddened Belisarius. Then in the year 542 he lost even the semblance of his master's favour, and became an utterly broken and ruined man. It was in that year that a pestilence, one of the most terrible that have ever devastated the East, visited Constantinople. It arose in Egypt, and in its leisurely course sought out and ravaged every corner of the Roman and Persian worlds, not sparing the new barbarian kingdoms. For four months it hung heavily over

Plague of Constantinople.

542.

Constantinople, the number of deaths rising at one time to five thousand daily. The markets were deserted, all ordinary crafts were abandoned, the cares of tending the patients in their terrible delirium and of burying the dead overtaxed the energies of their unstricken relatives. The work of burial had at length to be undertaken by the Emperor, who employed all the household troops for the purpose. Even so, it was impossible to dig graves fast enough to supply the terrible demand, and at length they were satisfied with stacking the corpses in a large and deserted fortress, which was roughly roofed over when it would hold no more. A sickening odour filled all Constantinople when the wind happened to set towards the city from this horrible charnel-house.

Justinian stricken by the pestilence.

Justinian himself was one of those who were struck down by this terrible pestilence, and for a time it seemed that he, like the great majority of those attacked, would fall a victim to the disease. The situation of Theodora was full of peril. The victims of her cruelty and avarice had left avengers who were all eager for her blood. The life of that weak, plague-stricken, probably delirious patient was all that intervened between her and death at the hands of an infuriated populace; unless, indeed—and this seemed the desperate woman's only chance of retaining life and power—the imminent death of her husband could be concealed long enough to give her time to assemble the senate in the palace, and to have some pliant nephew, or some popular general, who would promise to make her his wife, clothed in the purple and presented to the Romans in the amphitheatre as the new Augustus.

Anxiety of Theodora.

BOOK V. CH. 17.

542.

The army restless.

Such were the calculations of Theodora, as, under that form of government, they were sure to be the more or less avowed calculations of every ambitious and childless Empress. There was still, however, the army to be reckoned with, that supposed embodiment of the Roman people in arms by which in old time the title Imperator had been exclusively conferred. The Eastern army was jealous and uneasy. A rumour reached it that Justinian was already dead: and at a hastily-summoned military council some generals were heard to mutter that if a new Emperor were made at Constantinople without their consent they would not acknowledge him.

Recovery of Justinian.

Suddenly the whole aspect of affairs was changed by the unlooked-for recovery of Justinian. The ulcer, which was the characteristic mark of the disease, probably began to suppurate freely, and the other dangerous symptoms abated: such, at least Procopius tells us, was the almost invariable course of the malady in the small number who recovered. Now were all other voices hushed in a chorus of servile loyalty to Justinian and Theodora; and the officers who had been present at that dangerous council hastened to clear themselves of suspicion by each accusing some one else of treason to the present occupants of the throne. Two parties soon declared themselves. On the one side were John surnamed the Glutton, and Peter[1]; on the other, Belisarius and a general named Buzes, a greedy and self-seeking man, but one who had held the high offices of Consul and *Magister Militum per Orientem*.

Mutual accusations of the generals.

Vengeance of Theodora;

Theodora ordered all the generals to repair to the capital, caused a strict enquiry to be made into the

[1] We do not hear of this officer in the Italian wars.

proceedings at the so-called treasonable council, and decided, whether rightly or wrongly we cannot say, that Belisarius and Buzes had acted in opposition to her interests. Her vengeance on Buzes was swift and terrible. Summoning him to the women's apartments in the palace, as if she had some important tidings to communicate, she ordered him to be bound and conveyed to one of her secret dungeons. 'Dark, labyrinthine, and Tartarean,' says Procopius, were the underground chambers in which she immured her victims. Here, in utter darkness, unable to distinguish day from night, with no employment to divert his thoughts, dwelt for twenty-eight months the former Consul and Master of the Host. Once a day a servant entered the prison, forbidden to hear or utter a word, and cast his food down before the captive 'as to a dumb brute, dumb as a brute himself.' Thus he remained, men generally supposing him to be dead and not daring to mention his name, till Theodora, taking pity on his misery, in the third year of his imprisonment released him from his living tomb. Men looked upon him with awe, as if he had been the ghost of Buzes. His sight was gone and his health was broken, but we hear of him again, three years after his liberation, as commanding armies and as a person of importance at the Imperial court [1].

BOOK V. CH. 17. 542. On Buzes.

As for Belisarius, it was not thought desirable to proceed to such extreme lengths in his punishment, and there was probably even less evidence against him

Disgrace of Belisarius.

[1] De Bello Gotthico, iii. 32 and 34 (pp. 415, 426). Possibly Theodora's death, which happened in 548, may have been the reason of his being fully restored to favour. I suspect that Procopius has exaggerated the horrors of the imprisonment of Buzes.

BOOK V. CH. 17. than against Buzes of having discussed the succession to the throne in a treasonable manner. There was, however, a charge, which had been vaguely hanging over him for years, of having appropriated to himself the lion's share of the treasures of Gelimer and Witigis, and having brought only a remnant of those treasures into the palace of the Emperor. His recent Eastern campaigns, too, though they had not added greatly to his fame, were reported to have added unduly to his wealth. The law or the custom which regulated the division of such booty was perhaps not very clearly defined, and it might be urged with some reason that such splendid successes as those of Belisarius, achieved against such overwhelming odds, made him an exception to all rules. It is admitted, however, by Procopius that 'his wealth was enormous and worthy of the halls of kings;' and from the way in which the subject is handled by this historian, for so many years his friend and follower, we may fairly infer that this charge was substantially a just one. The chief blot upon the character of Belisarius, as upon the character of the general who in modern times most resembles him, Marlborough, was avarice. Unlike Marlborough, however, he was lavish in the spending, as well as greedy in the getting of money. His avarice was the child of ostentation rather than of mere love of hoarding. To see himself surrounded by the bravest warriors in the world, to look at their glittering armour, to feel that these men were his dependants, and that the world said that his household alone had delivered Rome, this was the thought dearest to the heart of Belisarius. For this he laboured and heaped up treasure, not always perhaps regarding the rule of right.

542.

All this splendour of his, however, was now shattered at a blow. If it was not safe to shut up Belisarius in a Tartarean dungeon, it was safe to disgrace him, and it was done thoroughly. The command of the army of the East was taken from him and given to his old lieutenant, Martin, the same who galloped with Ildiger along the Flaminian Way, bearing the General's message to Rimini, the same who was sent with Uliaris to relieve Milan, and who failed so disgracefully in his mission.

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542. Command taken from Belisarius and given to Martin.

Not only was the command taken from Belisarius, but, by an unusually high-handed exercise of power [1], his splendid military household was broken up. All those valiant life-guardsmen, both horse and foot-soldiers [2], taken from the master whom they had served with such loyal enthusiasm, were divided by lot among the rival generals and the eunuchs of the palace. The glittering armour and gay accoutrements of course went with the wearers. Some portion of the treasure of the chief, that which he had brought home from the Eastern campaign, was conveyed by one of the Empress's eunuchs to her own palace. All the band of devoted friends who had hitherto crowded round the steps of Belisarius were now forbidden even to speak to him. As Procopius, himself no doubt one of these forcibly silenced friends, has said, 'A bitter sight in truth it was, and one that men would have scarce believed possible, to see Belisarius walking about Byzantium as a common man, almost alone,

Military household of Belisarius broken up.

[1] Unless there was some sort of action 'de rebus repetundis' under which these proceedings were taken.

[2] Δορυφόροι καὶ ὑπασπισταί. It seems probable from this passage in Procopius that many of these were slaves, bought young by Belisarius and trained to the use of arms.

BOOK V. CH. 17. deep in thought, with sadness in his face, ever fearing death at the hands of an assassin.'

543. Theodora determines to reconcile Belisarius and Antonina.

All this time Antonina dwelt with him in the same house as a stranger, mutual resentment and suspicion separating the hearts that had once been so fondly united. Now came out the better side of Theodora's character in the scheme which she devised to reconcile these two divided souls, and at the same time to repay some part of her debt of gratitude to Antonina by restoring to her the love of her husband. Those who prefer it may accept the theory of Procopius, that the whole humiliation of Belisarius had been contrived by the cruel ingenuity of the Empress for the sole purpose of bringing him helpless and a suppliant to his wife's feet. To me it seems more probable that the disgrace of the General was, at least in appearance, justified by his questionable conduct concerning the treasure; that it was partly caused by the unslumbering jealousy of Justinian, and partly by Theodora's resentment for some incautious words of his at the military council; but that the idea of introducing Antonina's name into the settlement of the dispute, and reconciling Belisarius by one stroke both to his wife and to the Emperor, was due to some unextinguished instinct of good in the heart of the cruel Empress, and should not be set down against her on the page of history.

Ungracious reception at the palace.

One morning Belisarius went early to the palace, as was his wont, attended by a few shabbily-dressed followers. The Imperial pair appeared to be in no gracious mood towards him; the *valetaille* of the palace, taking the cue from their masters, flouted and insulted him. After a day thus drearily spent, dispirited and anxious, he returned to his palace,

looking this way and that, to see from which side the dreaded assassins would rush forth upon him. 'With this horror at his heart he went into his chamber and sat there upon the couch alone, revolving no noble thoughts in his heart, nor remembering the hero that he once had been, but dizzy and perspiring, full of trembling despair, and gnawed with slavish fears and mean anxieties.' So writes Procopius, somewhat forgetful of the difference between physical and moral courage, and, for private reasons of his own, unnecessarily severe on these

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543.

'Fears of the brave and follies of the wise.'

Antonina was walking up and down in the *atrium*, feigning an attack of indigestion, apparently longing to comfort her lord, but too proud to do so unasked. Then, just after sunset, came a messenger from the palace, named Quadratus, who, rapidly crossing the court, stood before the door of the men's apartment and called in a loud voice, 'A message from the Empress.' Belisarius, who made no doubt that this was the bearer of his death-warrant, drew his feet up on the couch and lay there upon his back, with no thought of self-defence, expecting death. His hopes revived at the sight of the letter which Quadratus handed to him, and which ran thus:—

'Theodora Augusta to the Patrician Belisarius [1].

Theodora's letter.

'What you have done to us, good Sir, you know very well. But I, on account of my obligations to your wife, have resolved to cancel all these charges against you for her sake, and to make her a present of your life. Henceforward, then, you may be encouraged

[1] The superscription is conjectural.

BOOK V. Ch. 17. 543. as to the safety of your life and property, but it rests with you to show what manner of husband you will be to her in future.'

A rapture of joy thrilled the heart of Belisarius as he read these words. Without waiting for the departure of the messenger he ran forth and fell

The reconciliation.

prostrate before Antonina. He kissed her feet[1], he clasped her robe; he called her the author of his life and his salvation; he would be her slave, her faithful slave henceforward, and would forget the name of husband. It was unheroic, doubtless, thus to humble himself at the feet of the woman who had so deeply wounded his honour; but it was love, not fear, that made him unheroic. It was not the coward's desire of life, it was the estranged lover's delight in the thought of ended enmity that unmanned Belisarius. For two years he had bitterly felt that

> 'To be wroth with one we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain.'

And now that a power above them both had ended this agony, he forgot the dignity of the Patrician and the General in the almost hysterical rapture of the reconciled husband.

The friends of Belisarius, including Procopius, probably condemned this reconciliation.

That reconciliation was an abiding one. Whatever were the later sins of Antonina, we hear no more of discord between her and Belisarius, rather of his infatuation in approving of all her actions. But the friends who had helped the injured husband in his quarrel found themselves the losers by this 'renewing

[1] Χειρὶ μὲν ἑκατέρᾳ περιλαβὼν αὐτῆς ἄμφω τὰς κνήμας, τὴν δὲ γλῶσσαν ἀεὶ τῶν ταρσῶν τῆς γυναικὸς μεταβιβάζων is the ridiculous exaggeration of Procopius, who describes the whole scene of the reconciliation in a spirit of absolute cynicism.

of love.' Photius, obliged to hide himself in the squalid habit of a monk at Jerusalem, called in vain for aid to his mighty father-in-law. Procopius probably found his career of promotion stopped by the same disastrous reconciliation, and now began to fashion those periods of terrible invective which were one day to be stored in the underground chambers of the *Anecdota*, menacing ruin to the reputations of Antonina, of Theodora, of Justinian, even of the once loved Belisarius.

Theodora's mode of dealing with the property of Belisarius.

Out of the sequestered property of the General the munificent Empress made a present to her husband of thirty hundred-weight of gold (£135,000), restoring the rest to its former owner. In order that her family might become possessed of the rest by ordinary course of law, she began to arrange a marriage between her grandson Anastasius[1] and Belisarius's only daughter Joannina.

Partial restoration of Belisarius to favour.

The entreaties of Belisarius that he might be allowed once again to lead the Eastern army against Chosroës were disregarded, partly on account of the remonstrances of Antonina, who passionately declared that she would never again visit those countries in which she had undergone the cruel indignity of arrest and imprisonment. The 'respectable' but not 'illustrious' office of 'Count of the Sacred Stable' was conferred upon him, to show that he was again received into some measure of Imperial favour. When it became more and more clear that the divided

[1] Ἀναστασίῳ τῷ τῆς βασιλίδος θυγατριδῷ. Alemannus in his notes to the Anecdota (p. 357, ed. Bonn) thinks that this was the son of a legitimate daughter of Justinian and Theodora. It seems to me more probable that the mother of Anastasius was an illegitimate daughter of Theodora born before her marriage with Justinian.

BOOK V. CH. 17. and demoralised generals in Italy would never make head against Totila, the Emperor graciously assigned
543. him the task of repairing all the blunders that had been committed in that land since he left it four years previously. At the same time a promise (so it is said) was exacted from him that he would ask for no money from the Imperial treasury for the war, but would provide for its whole equipment at his own expense. Thus feebly supported by his master, with his splendid band of household troops dispersed among the eunuchs of the palace, with his own spirit half broken by all the sorrows and humiliations of recent years, he was not likely to threaten the security of Justinian, nor to be heard of as Emperor of the West. Whether this needy and heart-broken man would cope effectually in war with the young and gallant Totila was another question, and one which will be answered in the following chapters.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SECOND SIEGE OF ROME.

Authorities.

Source :—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 10–20 (pp. 315–362). The reader will observe at every turn how much less definite and vivid is this part of the narrative than the previous portions where Procopius spoke as an eye-witness.

Guides :—

My descriptions of Portus and Ostia are founded partly on personal observation and partly on Lanciani's 'Scavi di Ostia,' Rome, 1881, and Grossi and Cancani's 'Descrizione delle rovine di Ostia Tiberino e Porto,' Rome, 1883.

May, 554.

Preparations of Belisarius.

BELISARIUS, on receiving the charge of the Italian war, tried to persuade some of the soldiers enlisted for the Persian campaign to serve under his banners, but the magic of his name was gone, and all refused. He therefore had to spend some time moving to and fro in Thrace, where, by a large expenditure of money—his own money probably—he succeeded in raising some young volunteers.

Junction with Vitalius.

Vitalius, whose commands had been hitherto chiefly in Dalmatia and Venetia, and who now held the high position of *Magister Militum per Illyricum*, met him at Salona; but the united forces of the two generals numbered only 4000 men. The first expedition directed

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Relief of Otranto.

by them was a decided success. The garrison of Otranto[1], hard pressed by the besieging Goths, had consented to surrender on a certain day if no help arrived previously. Valentine, whom the reader may perhaps remember as the groom of Photius who was raised from the ranks as a reward for his splendid bravery during the siege of Rome, was now sent by sea to relieve the outworn and enfeebled defenders of Otranto, and to substitute fresh and vigorous soldiers in their place. Arriving only four days before the stipulated day of surrender, and falling suddenly on the unsuspecting Goths, he succeeded in cutting his way through them to the citadel. The disappointed besiegers shortly after raised the siege and returned to Totila. Valentine also, having accomplished his commission and having left a whole year's supply of provisions in the lately beleaguered town, returned to Salona.

Belisarius at Ravenna.

Belisarius now moved up the coast to Pola in Istria, and from thence crossed to Ravenna. His own opinion was in favour of an immediate march to Rome[2], but Totila's forces were interposed in a menacing manner along the backbone of Italy from Campania to Calabria, and Vitalius persuaded him against his better judgment to make Ravenna his base of operations; Ravenna, which alike in the days of Honorius, of Odovacar, and Witigis, had been proved to be admirable as a hiding-place, but poor as a basis for offensive war.

Totila in the neighbourhood of Rome.

Totila meanwhile, who, by means of a fictitious deputation bearing letters professedly written in the name

[1] Hydruntum.

[2] De Bello Gotthico, iii. 13 (p. 329).

of the Roman commander of Genoa and asking for help, had cleverly, if somewhat unscrupulously, obtained information as to the real size of the new army of reconquest, felt that he could afford to despise it, and proceeded in a leisurely manner to tighten his grasp on Rome. Tivoli was taken, owing to some dispute between the inhabitants and the Isaurian garrison, and all the citizens, as we hear with regret, were put to the sword, the massacre being accompanied by circumstances of unusual atrocity[1]. The Tiber was watched to prevent provisions being borne down its stream into the city[2]: and a fleet of small swift sailing ships, stationed at Naples and the Lipari Islands, captured nearly all the vessels which from the south sought to make the harbour of Ostia, bringing corn to Rome. BOOK V. CH. 18. 544.

Belisarius' address to the citizens of Ravenna.

Belisarius, on entering Ravenna, (an entry how unlike that moment of supreme triumph when he marched into the same city four years previously), delivered an address to the inhabitants, Gothic as well as Roman, in which, while freely admitting the mistakes that had been made since his departure from Italy, he expressed the Emperor's unabated kindness and love towards all his subjects of whatever race, and earnestly entreated them to use all their influence with their friends to induce them to leave the service of the 'tyrant' Totila. The harangue, however, fell flat upon

[1] 'The Goths killed all the inhabitants with the priest of the place, in a manner which I shall not describe, although I know it, that I may not leave memorials of inhumanity to a later age,' says Procopius, setting herein a good example to some modern journalists.

[2] But Procopius confuses the Tiber and the Anio when he states (iii. 10) that the capture of *Tivoli* enabled Totila to block the former river.

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544. the listeners, who had learned in the last few years how little the kindness of the Roman Emperor was better than the tyranny of the barbarian. No defections from Totila's army resulted from this appeal.

Thorimuth and Vitalius in the Aemilia.

Thorimuth, one of the guardsmen of Belisarius—we again begin to hear of the military household of the General—was next sent into the province of Aemilia, to try his fortune with the cities in that rich and populous district. Vitalius with his Illyrian troops accompanied him, and for a time their efforts were successful. Fort after fort surrendered, and they were able to take up a strong position (probably their winter-quarters) in the important city of Bologna. Then a strange event took place, and one which well illustrates the intrinsic worthlessness of these Justinianic conquests. The Illyrians determined that they would serve no longer in Italy, and, withdrawing with swift secrecy from Bologna, marched back into their own land. The Emperor was very wroth, but after their ambassadors had set their case before him he could hardly retain his anger. They had in fact two excellent reasons for deserting. They had served for years in Italy without receiving any pay from the bankrupt treasury; and a great army of Huns was at that very moment wasting their homes and carrying off their wives and children into slavery. Totila, hearing of the defection of the Illyrians, tried to intercept the retreat of Vitalius and Thorimuth, but was outgeneralled and sustained a trifling defeat. None the less, however, had Bologna, and probably the whole province of Aemilia, to be evacuated by the Imperial troops.

The Illyrian foederati withdraw from Bologna.

545. The same brave guardsman Thorimuth, with two

comrades Ricilas and Sabinian, was next sent at the head of 1000 men to relieve the garrison of Osimo, which rock-cradled city was now being held as stubbornly for the Emperor as, six years before, it had been held for Witigis. They succeeded in entering the city by night, and apparently in supplying it with some fresh store of provisions. Ricilas however, in a fit of drunken hardihood, threw away his life in a fight which he had foolishly provoked, and from which he was somewhat ignobly trying to escape. Then came the necessary work of withdrawing from the city, in order not to aid the blockaders by adding to the number of mouths to be fed within its walls. Totila was informed by a deserter when the withdrawal was to take place, occupied an advantageous position about three miles from Osimo, fell upon them in the confusion of their midnight march, slew two hundred of them, and captured all their baggage and beasts of burden. The rest of the relieving army, including Thorimuth and Sabinian, escaped across the mountains to Rimini.

545. Relief of Osimo.

The Imperial troops defeated.

Procopius forgets to inform us of the after-fortunes of the garrison of Osimo. They must, however, have surrendered, eventually, to the Goths, since seven years later the place was undoubtedly held by Gothic soldiers[1].

Pesaro re-fortified.

The next exploit of Belisarius was a clever reconstruction of the defences of Pesaro. This little Hadriatic city, eighteen miles south of Rimini, had, together with her sister city of Fano, been dismantled by Witigis in order to prevent its occupation by the Byzantines. The gates had been destroyed and half of the circuit of the walls pulled down. Now, however,

[1] Compare De Bello Gotthico, iv. 23 (p. 584, l. 17, ed. Bonn).

BOOK V. Ch. 18. 545. Belisarius, who was anxious to secure the town for the sake of the good foraging-ground for cavalry which surrounded it, sent messengers by night to take exact measurements of the height and width of the gateways. Gates made to fit these openings and bound with iron were then sent by sea from Ravenna, and were soon erected by the soldiers who had been recently commanded by Thorimuth. The walls were rebuilt in any fashion, stones or clay or any other material that was at hand being used for the purpose[1], and Pesaro was once more a walled city, which Totila assaulted, but assaulted in vain.

May, 545. A twelvemonth had now elapsed since Belisarius received the charge of the Italian war, and what results had he to show? Otranto and Osimo relieved, and Pesaro re-fortified: this was not a very splendid account of a year's work of the famous Belisarius: and against these successes had to be set Tivoli captured and the strings of the net drawn perceptibly tighter round Rome by the leisurely operations of the contemptuous Totila. Belisarius keenly felt the impotence to which he was reduced, and broke his promise to Justinian to ask for no money for the war,—if such a promise was ever made,—by sending to Constantinople the following piteous epistle:—

Letter of Belisarius to Justinian. 'I have arrived in Italy, O best of Emperors! in great want of men, of horses, of arms, and of money. A man who has not a sufficient supply of these will

[1] *Ἔν τε τῷ ἀσφαλεῖ γενομένους ὅσα τοῦ περιβόλου καταπεπτώκει ὅτῳ δὴ ἀνῳκοδόμησαν τρόπῳ, λίθους τε καὶ πηλὸν καὶ ἄλλο ὁτιοῦν ἐμβαλλόμενοι.* The passage is interesting, as throwing some light on the hasty reconstruction of the walls of Rome in the following year, and also on such evidently 'tumultuary' work as the strange *Heidenmauer* at Wiesbaden.

hardly, I think, ever be found able to carry on war. 'Tis true that after diligent perambulation of Thrace and Illyria I was able to collect some soldiers there; but they are few in numbers, wretched in quality, have no weapons in their hands worth speaking of, and are altogether unpractised in fighting. As for the soldiers whom I found in this country, they are discontended and disheartened, cowed by frequent defeats, and so bent on flight when the foe appears that they slip off their horses and dash their arms to the ground. As for making Italy provide the money necessary for carrying on the war, that is impossible; to so large an extent has it been reconquered by the enemy. Hence we are unable to give to the soldiers the long over-due arrears of their pay, and this consciousness of debt takes from us all freedom of speech towards them. And you ought, Sire[1]! to be plainly told that the larger part of your nominal soldiers have enlisted and are now serving under the banners of the enemy. If then the mere sending of Belisarius to Italy was all that was necessary, your preparations for the war are perfect: but if you want to overcome your enemies you must do something more than this, for a General without subordinates is nothing. First and foremost, it behoves you to send me my own guards, both mounted and unmounted[2]; secondly, a large number of Huns and other barbarians; and thirdly, money to pay them withal.'

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[1] ὦ δέσποτα.

[2] This passage in the De Bello Gotthico confirms the statement in the Anecdota as to the breaking-up of Belisarius's body-guard and its distribution among the eunuchs of the palace. This is one of several minute points of correspondence which prove the genuineness of the Anecdota.

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This letter, so pathetic, but yet so outspoken, was sent to Constantinople by the hands of John the nephew of Vitalian, who solemnly promised a speedy return. Everything, however, seemed to combine against the unfortunate commander of the Italian war. John saw a favourable opportunity for advancing his own interests by a brilliant marriage, and while Belisarius languished at Ravenna, the Byzantine populace were admiring a splendid pageant, the wedding festival of John and the daughter of Germanus, the great-niece of the Emperor Justinian.

545. John sent to Constantinople.

He marries the niece of Justinian.

Belisarius leaves Ravenna.

So the year wore on. Belisarius felt more keenly than ever the mistake which he had made in shutting himself up in Ravenna, far from Rome, the real key of the position. Leaving Justin (who seems to have quitted his charge at Florence or possibly had been unable to hold that city against the Goths) to take the chief command at Ravenna, the General re-crossed the Hadriatic to form a new army at Durazzo. There, in course of time, he was met by the bridegroom John, raised doubtless above all fear of rebuke for his tardiness by the splendour of his new connection. With him came the Armenian General Isaac[1], and they brought under their standards an army, apparently a considerable army, of Romans and barbarians.

He meets John at Dyrrhachium.

Steady progress of Totila.

Meanwhile Totila, in this year 545, was steadily advancing, strengthening his position in Central Italy, tightening his grip on Rome. Fermo and Ascoli, two cities of Picenum, were taken; Spoleto, perhaps the most important city on the Flaminian Way, was sur-

[1] Brother of Narses (not the Eunuch Narses), and Aratius. Visitors to Ravenna will be reminded of the tomb of a much later Isaac, the Exarch, and 'the great ornament of Armenia.'

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rendered by its governor Herodian; men said too easily surrendered, because Herodian feared an investigation which Belisarius was about to institute into some irregularities of his past life[1]. Assisi (how little did the men of that day think of the wealth of associations which in after ages would cluster round the name!) was more loyally defended for the Emperor by the valiant Goth, Siegfried[2], but he was slain in a sally and Assisi opened its gates to Totila. The neighbouring citadel of Perugia still held out, but its garrison was weakened and discouraged by the assassination of their brave commander Cyprian by one of his body-guard, who, if Procopius's story be correct, was bribed by Totila to commit this crime[3]. Uliphus, the murderer, took refuge in Totila's camp. We shall meet him once again, in the last days of the war, and mark his punishment.

Totila formally lays siege to Rome.

At length, in the autumn probably of 545, Totila marched to Rome and formally commenced the siege of the city. Both in the Campagna and everywhere else throughout Italy he was careful to respect the property of the tillers of the soil. All that he expected of them was that they should pay into his hands the rent which the *Colonus* would otherwise have remitted to his patron, and the taxes which the free husbandman

[1] Λογισμοὺς γὰρ αὐτῷ Βελισάριος τῶν βεβιωμένων ἠπείλησε πράξειν. Perhaps the examination related to some embezzlement of the public treasure, but it is not easy to get this meaning out of the words.

[2] I cannot help thinking that the Σισίφριδος of Procopius is a mis-rendering of this well-known name.

[3] The importance of Cyprian's death is shown by Totila's allusion to it two years later in his harangue to his troops (De Bell. Gotth. iii. 25, p. 386).

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(if such there were) would have paid to the Imperial logothete. No money was to be sent to Constantinople; all that would have gone thither was to go to the Gothic King; and in return for this, the corn and the cattle of the peasant were to be left untouched, the honour of his wife and his daughter to be held inviolate. Such was the motto of Totila, and it is not surprising that the Italian peasant viewed with indifference, if not with actual pleasure, the extension of his kingdom, nor that his own army, paying for everything which it consumed, lived in comparative comfort, while Famine was coming ever nearer and nearer before the eyes of the inhabitants of the beleaguered City.

Discouragement in Rome.

A sally, against the orders both of Bessas the Commandant of Rome and of Belisarius himself, had been undertaken by Artasires the Persian and Barbatian the Thracian (two of the General's guardsmen whom he had sent to Rome in order to keep up the spirits of the inhabitants), but had completely failed, and great discouragement was the result. Already perhaps a movement was being begun to escape from the hardships of a long siege by an early surrender. At least we are told that Cethegus, a man holding the rank of Patrician and *Princeps Senatus*, was brought before a council of generals, charged with treasonable designs. Nothing apparently could be proved against him, but he was permitted, or ordered, to depart from Rome, and repaired to Civita Vecchia[1].

[1] Then called Centumcellae. Readers of Dahn's 'Kampf um Rom' will be interested in this, the only mention by Procopius, of the Cethegus who figures so largely in the pages of that romance. Cethegus was Consul in 504, Magister Officiorum probably about

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546. Valentine and Phocas sent to Porto.

The year 546 had probably begun when Belisarius, still unable himself to repair to the scene of action, sent Valentine to Porto, at the mouth of the Tiber, to assist the troops which were posted there under the command of Innocentius in harassing the besieging army, and to clear the river for the passage of provision-ships up to Rome. With Valentine was sent Phocas, one of the General's mounted guards, and an exceedingly brave and capable soldier. They had five hundred men under their command. It was decided that these new troops should make an attack upon the camp of the enemy, which was to be seconded by a simultaneous sally from the city. Bessas however, the Imperial Commandant of Rome, though warned of the intended movement, refused to allow any of the three thousand men under his command to join in it. The attack therefore, though fairly successful, achieved nothing, and the assailants returned to Porto neither the better nor the worse for what they had done. They sent an upbraiding message to Bessas, and warned him that on a given day and hour they would repeat the attack, which they implored him to support by a vigorous sortie. Bessas, however, whose understanding of his duty seems to have been entirely summed up in the modern phrase 'masterly inactivity,' again refused to imperil any of his men for such an enterprise. A deserter from the army of Innocentius warned Totila of the coming attack, and consequently, when the Imperialist troops issued from the walls of Porto, they soon found themselves in a Gothic ambuscade. Most

Bessas the governor of Rome will not co-operate with the troops at Porto.

521. After the third siege of Rome he escaped (as we are told by the author of the Life of Vigilius in the Liber Pontificalis) to Constantinople. See Usener's Anecdoton Holderi, pp. 6–8.

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546.

Death of Valentine.

of the five hundred fell, and their leaders with them. So perished the brave groom of Photius, whom we first saw stemming the tide of battle which surged round Belisarius and his dark roan horse, hard by the Milvian Bridge. Since then his name has been much in the mouths of men. Now his aforetime master, an emaciated and heart-broken monk, kneels beside the cradle at Bethlehem, and he lies upon the desolate Campagna, outside the walls of Porto, cloven by a Gothic broad-sword.

Corn-ships sent by Vigilius.

Soon after this, some ships laden with corn for the Roman people were sent by Pope Vigilius, who was at this time, for reasons which will afterwards appear, residing in the island of Sicily. The Goths saw the ships coming, and guessing their errand arranged an ambush, probably from that side of the Tiber which washes the Isola Sacra, between Porto and Ostia. The Romans from their battlements saw the whole stratagem—every one who has climbed the bell-tower of Ostia or of Porto knows how far the sight can travel over that unbroken alluvial plain—and made vigorous signs, by waving their garments and pointing with their hands, to prevent their friends from choosing that channel and urge them to land at some other point of the coast. Unfortunately the signals which were meant to discourage were interpreted as enthusiastic encouragement and acclamation. The corn-ships came sailing on, right into the Portensian channel, and close past the Gothic ambuscade. They were at once boarded, their cargoes appropriated for the Gothic army, and a bishop who was on board, and whose name by a curious coincidence happened to be also Valentine, was straitly interrogated as to the position of affairs in

The corn-ships boarded by the Goths.

Sicily. Detecting him in returning false answers to his questions, the King, with a flash of barbarian rage blazing out from beneath the restraints of reason and self-discipline, ordered the lying ecclesiastic's hands to be cut off and let him go whither he would.

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About this time, two years after the re-appointment of Belisarius, the important city of Placentia, one of the keys of the Aemilian Way, was surrendered to the Goths after nearly a year's siege, in which the defenders had endured terrible hardships from famine, being at length reduced, it was whispered, to feed upon human flesh. The reduction of the important city of Placentia was a great gain to Totila, who could now move his troops freely between Pavia, the heart of the Gothic resistance, and the valleys of the Arno and the Tiber.

May, 546. Placentia surrendered to the Goths.

By this time in Rome also the pressure of famine was beginning to be sorely felt, and the citizens—perhaps without the knowledge, perhaps against the wish of Bessas—decided to send an embassy to Totila, to see if terms could be arranged for a truce, and for the eventual surrender of the City, if help came not by a given day. The envoy chosen was the deacon Pelagius, a man who had resided long in Constantinople on terms of close friendship with the Emperor, who had recently returned to Rome with large stores of wealth, which he had generously employed in relieving the distresses of the poorer citizens. Nine years after this time, on the death of Vigilius, he was to be installed in the chair of St. Peter. Already during the long absence of Vigilius he wielded an influence little less than Papal in the Eternal City.

Famine in Rome.

Pelagius sent as ambassador to Totila.

Totila received the generous deacon with great outward show of reverence and affection, but before he

Totila's speech.

BOOK V. CH. 18. 546. began to set forth his request, addressed him with courteous but decided words: 'We Goths feel as strongly as the Romans the duty of showing every possible respect to the office of an ambassador. In my opinion, however, that respect is better shown by an early and frank statement of what can and what cannot be conceded, than by any number of honeyed words, holding out hopes which the speaker does not mean to gratify. Let me therefore at once and plainly tell you that there are three things which it is useless for you to request. On any other subject I will hear you gladly, and if possible grant your petition.

Three excepted topics.

1. Sicily. 'The first is pardon for the inhabitants of Sicily. It is impossible for us to forget the flourishing condition of that island, the very granary of Rome, which Theodoric, in reliance on the honour of its people and in answer to their earnest request, consented to leave unoccupied by Gothic garrisons. What was the reward of this generous confidence? As soon as the Imperial armament appeared in the offing, an armament which it was easily within their power to have resisted, they sent no tidings of its approach to the Goths, they did not occupy one of the strong places in the island, but at once, like runaway-slaves seeking a new master, they crowded down to the shore with suppliant hands and said, "Our cities are yours, we are faithful subjects of the Emperor." This was the turning-point in the fortunes of our nation. It was from this island that the enemy sallied forth as from a fortress to occupy any part of Italy that they pleased. It was by the assistance of the Sicilians that they gathered those vast stores of corn which enabled them for a whole year to stand a blockade in Rome. These are not

injuries which the Goths can ever forget: therefore ask for no pardon for the Sicilians. BOOK V. CH. 18.

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'The second point is the preservation of the walls of Rome. Behind these walls our enemies sheltered themselves for a year, never venturing to meet us in the open field, but wearing out our noble army by all sorts of tricks and clever surprises. We should be fools to allow this kind of stratagem to be practised against us hereafter: and moreover, the citizens of Rome will gain by the demolition of their walls. No more deadly assaults, no more of the yet deadlier blockades for them in future. Safe and quiet in their unwalled city they will await the arbitrament of battle, which will be waged on some other field between the opposing armies. 2. The walls of Rome.

'The third point is the surrender of the slaves who have fled to us from their Roman owners. We have received these men on a solemn promise that we will never give them up to their former masters. We have allowed them to stand alongside of us in the battle. If after all this we were to abandon them to the mercy of their lords, you yourselves would know that there was no reliance to be placed on the promises of men so faithless and so ungrateful.' 3. The fugitive slaves.

Such in substance was the speech of Totila [1], a speech which, though too vindictive in its reference to the Sicilians, contained much unanswerable argument from the Gothic stand-point. The Deacon Pelagius did not attempt to answer it, but made a short and ill-tempered Reply of Pelagius.

[1] No doubt the phraseology of this speech is thoroughly Procopian, and it must be looked upon in great measure as a rhetorician's exercise: but there is every reason to think that the three points enumerated were really reserved by Totila.

BOOK V. CH. 18. 546. speech to the effect that courtesy to an ambassador was only a mockery if he had no chance of obtaining what he asked for. For himself he would rather receive a slap in the face and return to those who sent him with some one of his requests granted, than be received with ever so great a show of politeness and return unsuccessful. He declined to make any request whatever to Totila, in face of the prohibition to touch on the three reserved points, and would only remark that if the King determined to wage a truceless war on the unhappy Sicilians, who had never borne arms against him, there was little hope of mercy for the Romans in whose hands he had seen the spear. He would have nothing more to do with the embassy, but would leave the matter in the hands of God, who was not unaccustomed to punish those who behaved themselves arrogantly towards a suppliant.

The Roman citizens make supplication to Bessas.

With heavy hearts the Roman citizens saw Pelagius return from the mission which his own peevishness had made a fruitless one. In large numbers they thronged to the house—perhaps the Pincian Palace, perhaps one of the old Imperial Palaces overlooking the Forum—which served as a Praetorium, and where abode the representatives of the Emperor. The council of officers before whom they laid their sad case was presided over by Bessas and Conon; Bessas the Thracian Ostrogoth who had defended the Porta Maggiore against his countrymen in the earlier siege, Conon the leader of Isaurians, who three years before had found himself forced by pressure, such as the citizens were now bringing to bear, to surrender Naples to Totila. In terms of abject misery the citizens of Rome put up their prayer to these iron-hearted men. 'We do not

appear before you as your fellow-countrymen, as members of the same great commonwealth, as men who willingly received you within our walls, and have fought side by side with you against a common enemy. Forget all this: imagine that we are captives taken in war, imagine that we are slaves. Yet even the slave is fed by his master. And only for this do we pray, for food enough to keep us alive. If you cannot or will not do this, manumit us, give us leave to depart hence, and so save yourselves the trouble of digging graves for your servants. If that again be impossible then kill us outright. Sudden death will be sweet in comparison with this lingering torture, and you will be quit of many thousand murmuring Romans by one blow.'

Reply of Bessas.

Bessas and the generals round him gravely replied to this passionate outburst, that they could adopt none of the three courses suggested: that it was quite impossible to supply rations to the non-combatant dwellers in Rome, that it would be prejudicial to the Emperor's interests to allow the citizens to depart, and that to kill them all would be an unholy deed. Belisarius and the new army from Constantinople would reach Rome before long, and they must patiently await their arrival.

Forestalling and regrating by the generals.

It was evidently the determination of Bessas and his brother officers, who, it must be remembered, were for the most part men of barbarian origin themselves, to look with absolute indifference on the misery of the mere citizens of Rome, nay, even to trade upon it for their own advantage. A large supply of corn had been accumulated in the magazines, but this was all strictly reserved for the soldiers. A wealthy Roman,

BOOK V. CH. 18. 546. however, might buy at famine prices from a soldier such part of his ration as he did not require, nay, it was believed that even Bessas and Conon were not above enriching themselves by this ungenerous traffic[1]. The quotations in this terrible market rose and rose, till at last the Roman patrician had to pay at the rate of four hundred and forty-eight shillings for a quarter of wheat[2]. Destitution of the citizens. The less wealthy middle-class citizens paid a fourth of this price for bran; and, made Spartans by necessity, looked upon the coarse bread into which it was baked as the sweetest and most delicate of food. Animal food was of course hardly ever to be procured. Once some men of the life-guard of Bessas found an ox outside the walls, which they sold for the comparatively moderate price of £30 sterling[3]. Fortunate was the Roman deemed who came upon the carcase of a horse or other beast of burden, and could thus once more have the delight of chewing flesh. For the great mass of needy citizens the staple article of food was the nettles which grew freely under the walls and in the many ruined temples and palaces of Rome. To prevent the leaves from stinging the lips and throat, they were cooked with great care, and in this way a tantalising semblance of nourishment was given to the craving stomach. These nettles before

[1] To have actually sold the corn out of the magazines at these starvation-prices and put the money into their own pockets would have perhaps been too daring an act of embezzlement. More probably the generals drew an unnecessarily large *annona* from the public store and then sold the surplus to the starving Romans.

[2] Seven *aurei* (no doubt 'solidi aurei') for one *medimnus* (=a bushel and a half).

[3] Ἀπεδίδοντο Ῥωμαίοις πεντήκοντα χρυσῶν.

long became the universal food of all classes. No more *aurei* were left in the girdle even of the patrician, no household goods which he could barter for food, and, worst of all, even the soldiers' rations were growing scantier, so that neither buyers nor sellers existed to form a market. The flesh of the citizens was all wasted away, their skin was dark and livid, they moved about like spectres rather than men, and many while still walking among the ruins and chewing the nettles between their teeth suddenly sank to the earth and gave up the ghost.

The cry of the children.

One unhappy Roman, the father of five children, found himself surrounded by his little ones, who plucked at his robe and uttered those two terrible words, 'Father! bread!' A sudden and terrible serenity came over his face, and he said to them, 'My children! follow me.' They followed in the hope that he had some unknown store of food. He walked rapidly to one of the bridges over the Tiber, mounted the parapet, veiled his face with his robe, his children all the while looking on, and plunged headlong in the stream. Death, even a coward's death, leaving his little ones alone with their misery, was better than hearing any longer that heart-rending cry.

The non-combatants allowed to depart.

At length, when creatures generally deemed unfit for food, such as dogs and mice, had become unattainable luxuries; when men were staying the hunger-pang with the most loathsome substances; when stories of cannibalism were becoming more and more frequent and well-authenticated, and when still Belisarius came not; at length the hard heart of Bessas relented, and he agreed for a large sum of money to allow the non-combatants to leave Rome. A few

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escaped unhurt through the enemy's outposts. Many were pursued and slain. Yet more perhaps died of the effects of the famine, on the road or on ship-board, before they had arrived at their journey's end. 'To so low a point,' says Procopius, thinking doubtless of the four fateful letters which were once carried in triumph round the world[1],—'to so low a point had fallen the fortunes of *the Senate and the People of Rome*[2].'

Belisarius and John differ as to the plan of the campaign.

What meanwhile delayed the advance of Belisarius to the relief of the beleaguered city? In the council of war which was held at Durazzo[3] he had earnestly pleaded that this was the most pressing duty of the Imperial generals, and that in order to effect it they should embark the whole army on ship-board, when with a favouring breeze they might in five days reach the mouth of the Tiber. His rival John, on the other hand, pointed to the insecure tenure by which the Goths held Calabria[4] and the South of Italy, and maintained that their true policy was to land at one of the southern ports, receive those countries back again into the Imperial allegiance, and then by a rapid march through Samnium and Campania take Totila in the rear and raise the siege of Rome. As neither general could convince the other, and Belisarius could

[1] S. P. Q. R.

[2] Ῥωμαίων μὲν οὖν τῇ τε βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ ἐκεχωρήκει ἐς τοῦτο ἡ τύχη.

[3] Procopius almost invariably calls Dyrrhachium (Durazzo) by its earlier name, Epidamnus.

[4] I of course use Calabria always in the classical sense, for the end of the Apulian province, not in its modern sense, which is nearly equivalent to Bruttii. The ancient Calabria was the heel, the modern is the toe, of Italy.

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not force the husband of Justinian's great-niece to obey him, a compromise[1] was agreed upon, which was perhaps worse than either plan pursued singly. While Belisarius and the Armenian Isaac with one part of the troops[2] set sail for the Tiber, John with the remainder was to prosecute the campaign in Calabria and, as soon as might be, meet his comrades under the walls of Rome[3].

Belisarius in Calabria,

Belisarius first set sail, and meeting with contrary winds, was forced to take shelter in the harbour of Otranto. The Goths, who had returned to the siege of that place, fled when they saw his fleet approaching, and halted not till they reached Brindisi, at the distance of fifty miles. From thence they sent messengers to tell their King of the invasion of Calabria. Totila sent word to them to hold on as long as they could, but meanwhile relaxed not the vigilance of his blockade of Rome. Soon the wind changed, and Belisarius, after a favourable voyage, reached Portus at the mouth of the Tiber.

at Porto.

John lands in Calabria.

Soon afterwards John crossed the Hadriatic Gulf, and, as good luck would have it, landed not far from

[1] The language of Procopius (De B. G. iii. 18 ; p. 350) does not expressly assert that this plan was a compromise, but I think it leaves us at liberty to infer it.

[2] How were the troops divided and what was their total number? I do not find the answer to these questions in Procopius. One of the many proofs that he does not write this part of his history as an eye-witness is the deficiency of accurate information on points like these.

[3] In the Anecdota (cap. v) Procopius asserts that John, who by his marriage with the daughter of Germanus had enrolled himself in the opposite court-party to that of Theodora, was afraid of being assassinated by the contrivance of Antonina, and for that reason would never join forces with Belisarius.

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Brindisi. A Gothic scout who had been taken prisoner begged for his life, and promised in return to guide him to the enemy. 'First of all,' said the Imperial General, 'show me where the horses pasture.' Accordingly the man led him to a green plain where the horses of the Goths were feeding. On each horse's back leaped a Byzantine foot-soldier, and then they galloped to the camp of the unsuspecting foe. An utter rout followed, and this defeat opened the whole province of Calabria to the Imperialists. Canusium opened its gates to them, and hither came Tullianus son of Venantius, long ago governor of Bruttii and Lucania under Theodoric. Tullianus fearlessly spoke of the oppressions wrought by the Emperor's generals in Italy, oppressions which had compelled the inhabitants of these provinces, much against their will, to accept the yoke of the Goths, Arians and barbarians though they were, as the less intolerable of the two evils. Now, however, if John would promise to prevent the ravages of his soldiery, Tullianus would use his influence to obtain the speedy submission of the two provinces. The promise was given, and by the good offices of Tullianus, Bruttii and Lucania were speedily recovered for the Empire.

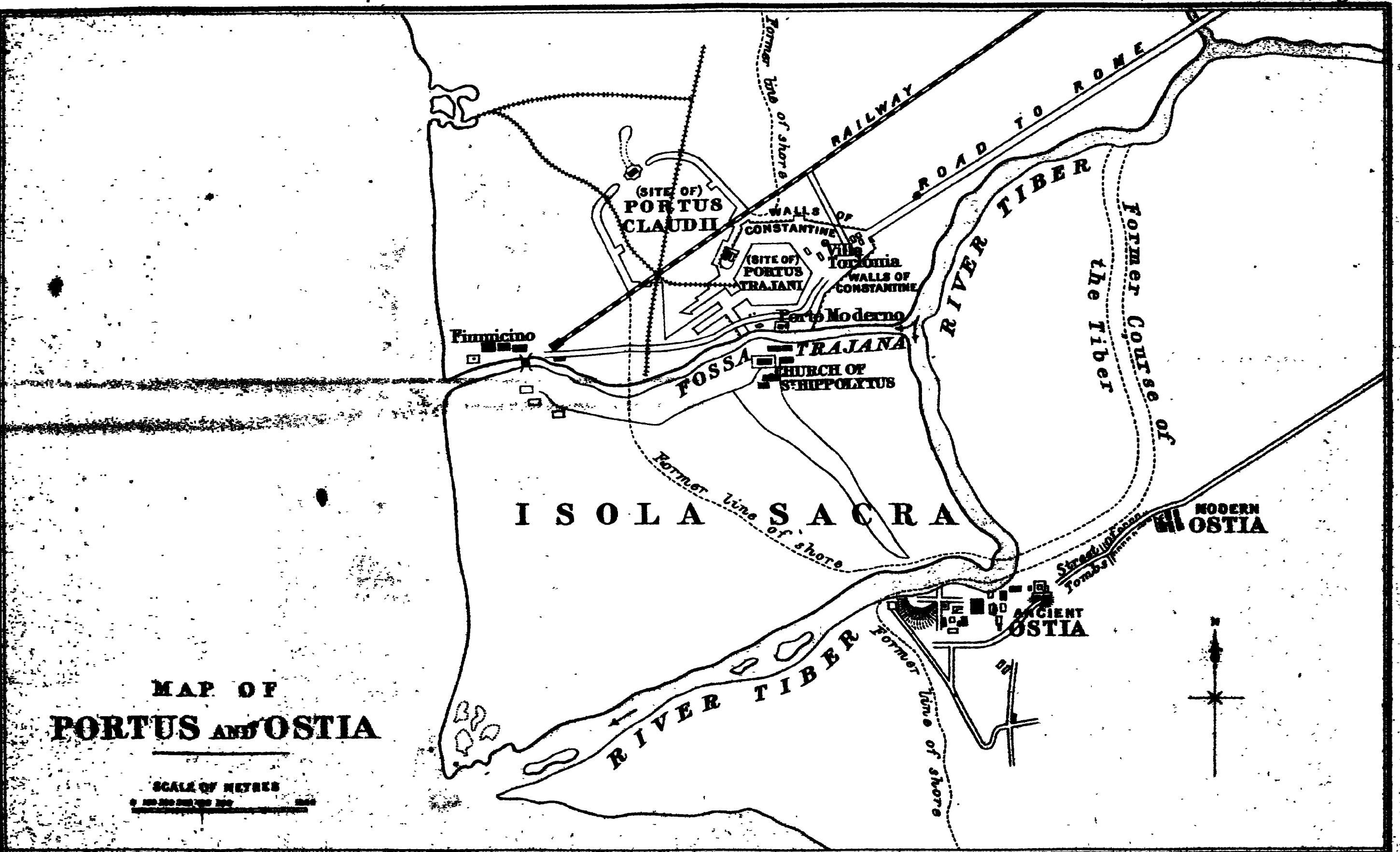
Victory of Brundusium.

Bruttii and Lucania recovered for the Empire.

John comes no further towards Rome.

Here, however, John's advance towards Rome stopped. Three hundred horsemen sent by Totila to Capua were sufficient to check his further progress, notwithstanding the urgent messages of Belisarius, who bitterly complained that he who had been allowed to select the bravest men in the army, 'and all of them barbarians,' should allow himself to be checked by a little body of three hundred men. The qualification thus emphasised by Belisarius shows

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clearly enough how little the citizens of the Roman Empire had to do with winning the Empire's battles. John now turned southwards, and inflicted a crushing defeat on Recimund, who, with an army of Goths, Moors, and deserters from the Imperial ranks, was holding Reggio for Totila, to prevent any succours being sent from Sicily to the mainland[1]. But this victory had little effect on the main course of the war. While the great duel was going on around the towers of Rome, John in his Apulian camp was only a listless spectator of the agony of the Empire.

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546. Victory near Rhegium.

The narrative now turns to Belisarius, who, from Porto as his base of operations, is about to make an attempt for the relief of Rome. At the risk of a little repetition it will be well to give a somewhat detailed description of the two harbours of Rome, which, after several alternations of prosperity and decay, are both now practically deserted, Portus and Ostia.

Belisarius at Porto.

Let us take Ostia first, though it makes the less conspicuous figure in our present narrative. It is situated on the south of the Tiber, on the left bank, that is to say, of the left-hand channel of the stream. The excavations of recent years have been fruitful in results for the archaeologist, and it may be doubted whether any other ruins, except those of Pompeii, enable us more vividly to reproduce the actual appearance of a Roman city. We see the broad road lined with tombs, leading up to the city-gate: we see the narrow streets paved with large flat stones on which the wheel-marks of the Roman *biga* are yet visible: we see the semicircular area and columns of a theatre:

Description of Ostia.

[1] Reggio was probably taken at this time, as it had to be recaptured by Totila in 549 (see p. 549).

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we see the steps and part of the portico of the stately Temple of Vulcan: we see the chambers of an Imperial palace in which Antoninus Pius perhaps spent his summers, and among them one little chapel, dedicated, probably in the second century, to the worship of Mithras, the Eastern Sun-god. Almost more interesting, as enabling us more vividly to picture the commercial life of the city, are the magazines, in one of which are still to be found some dozen or so of *dolia*, earthenware hogsheads once filled with wine or oil, now empty and buried up to their necks in the fine sand of the Tiber. Here too is a well-preserved gateway once leading into a court-yard lined with warehouses, and bearing on the keystone of the arch the sculptured resemblance of a Roman *modius*[1], as a reminder, perhaps, to the merchant, of the duty of giving just measure to all his customers. Not far off is a stone on which some public notice, possibly for the regulation of the market, has been affixed. Everywhere we feel that we are tracing the lineaments of a great city of commerce, though one that has been dead for centuries.

Alteration of the coast-line.

One thing disappoints us in Ostia, and yet in our disappointment helps to explain its present desolation. We miss the sea. We have read in Minucius Felix how at Ostia the three friends who were about to hold high converse on Fate and Providence and the nature of the gods, first walked along the yielding sand, and watched the boys playing 'duck and drake' with their smooth stones rebounding from the Mediterranean waves. We have read how three centuries later Monica and Augustine sat upon the same shore

[1] Peck-measure.

and gazed over the same expanse of sea, as the mother talked with her recovered son of the joys of the heavenly kingdom. But the Ostia of to-day gives us no help in picturing either of these scenes. The sea has retreated to a distance of three miles from its walls: we see only the flat and desolate Campagna, the muddy Tiber, the grass-grown mounds of the deserted city.

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The Sacred Island.

Now let us leave Ostia and turn our steps to Portus. A ferry-boat takes us across the Fiumara, as the broad, sluggish, turbid southern channel of the Tiber is called. Then a walk of two miles across the sandy expanse of the Isola Sacra brings us to the northern channel. The island called the Isola Sacra, which is now, owing to the recession of the coast-line, five or six times as large as it was in the days of Procopius, was then, though solitary, fair as the garden of Venus, full of roses and all fragrant flowers, says an enthusiastic geographer of the fourth century[1]. Now, a few low trees provide the inhabitants with fire-wood, and a poor and coarse grass affords pasture to the not always inoffensive herds of buffaloes. A celebrated temple stood here dedicated to the Great Twin Brethren, but even its site is now forgotten. At the

[1] Aethicus in his Cosmographia: 'At the 6th [16th] milestone from the City the Tiber parts into two streams, making the island between Portus Urbis and the city of Ostia, whither the Roman people with the Prefect of the City or the Consul goes forth to celebrate sacred rites with solemn festivity. The island thus made by the Tiber is so green and pleasant that never, in winter or summer, does it fail to supply admirable grass for pasture. In spring it is so filled with roses and other flowers that for its abundance of tints and odours this island is called "ipsa Libanus ?) almae Veneris."' I take this quotation from Cluverius's Italia Antiqua, p. 879.

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end of the path however, just opposite Porto, we come to the ancient tower which marks the spot where once stood the church of Saint Hippolytus, the cathedral church of Portus, separated from the city by the Tiber channel, and rightly named after the most famous bishop of that see, whose great work, a Refutation of all Heresies, has in our own day been recovered for ecclesiastical literature [1].

Porto Moderno.

Again crossing in a ferry-boat the waters of the Tiber, but this time the northern channel, we reach the village of Porto Moderno. The modern successor to Portus as a Mediterranean harbour is the little town of Fiumicino, two miles further down the stream. *There* we find a small wooden pier projecting into the sea, a few ships discharging their cargoes, a row of tall lodging-houses, all filled during a few weeks in spring by the crowd of bathers from Rome, all empty and deserted in September from fear of the everywhere brooding malaria. *Here*, in this so-called Porto Moderno, which was really called into existence by Pope Gregory IV [2] a few years before the birth of our Alfred the Great, hard by the then ruined Portus of the Emperors, there are a modernised church, a mediaeval castle, in one room of which are collected the Latin inscriptions discovered in the neighbourhood: not much else to interest the archaeologist, except a fallen column, once no doubt forming part of the elder Portus, on which, rudely carved perhaps by the

[1] It is thought by some that the title 'Sacra,' which was borne by the island already in the time of Procopius (De Bell. Gotth. i. 26), was given to it from this church. Others think it was from the festivals held upon it in honour of Castor and Pollux (Descrizione delle rovine, &c., 39, 40).

[2] 827–844.

knife of one of his soldiers, appear five letters of the name of the glorious Vandal, Stilicho[1].

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546. Site of the ancient Portus.

We take a few steps northwards and find ourselves looking upon a piece of water which as it recedes from us becomes shallower, changes into rushes, into marsh, into firm land. We soon observe a certain regularity about its sides, and find that it is in fact a regular hexagon, each side nearly 300 yards long. Yes, this is the celebrated hexagonal harbour of Trajan. Long rows of massive warehouses, in which were stored the rations of Egyptian and Sicilian corn for all the people of Rome, were once mirrored in its waters: even yet some huge blocks of masonry remain to show how solid was their building. The greatest ships of the ancient world, ships of commerce and of war, laden with corn or with legions, have glided in by the deep canal which is now represented only by a little brook that a child could step over, and have manœuvred easily in the capacious dock which is now a reedy fish-pond. At each angle of the hexagon rose a column, crowned with a statue. On our right hand, full fronting the opening by which the ships entered the basin, stood a colossal statue of the founder himself[2], the mighty Emperor Trajan. Now, almost on the same spot, one may see the neat villa of the present owner of Portus and Ostia and all the intervening and surrounding country, the Prince Torlonia. A fine herd of horses grazes on the margin of the pool: the frogs

Trajan's harbour.

[1] The letters are shaped thus: ST'L¯C. The column is on the left-hand side of the gateway looking towards Ostia. Of course the theory that they were carved by a soldier of Stilicho is mere conjecture.

[2] The head of this statue is now in the Vatican, in the Sala del

BOOK V. CH. 18. fill the air with their harsh melody: other signs of life there are none.

546. Harbour of Claudius. Outside of the hexagonal basin, that is to the north-west of it, was formerly the yet larger harbour of Claudius, with a pier curving round to the north-east, the work of Theodoric. This is now even more blended with the desolate Campagna than the work of Trajan. The name of Claudius is great at Portus as it is in the valley of the Anio. It was from this port that his fleet sailed for the conquest of the 'almost world-severed' island of Britain. The northern channel which he cut for the river had the double effect of making the new harbour possible and of removing the inundations with which Father Tiber had been wont to visit the city of his sons. A fair inscription, which was found some fifty years ago in the excavations of Cardinal Pallavicini and has been placed by his orders on the side of the modern carriage-road to Porto, records these beneficent labours of the dull-witted Emperor[1].

State of Ostia and Portus at the time of Belisarius. We have yielded perhaps too long to the melancholy fascination of these scenes, once filled with the lively hum of commerce, echoing to the voice of sailors from every country on the Mediterranean, and now abandoned to the bittern and the cormorant. We must return to the sixth century and look upon them as they were seen by Belisarius. Ostia in his time was

[1] The inscription runs thus:—

TI . CLAVDIVS . DRVSI . F . CAESAR
AVG . GERMANICVS . PONTIF . MAX
TRIB . POTEST . VI . COS . III . DESIGN . IIII . IMP . XII . P . P
FOSSIS . DVCTIS . A . TIBERI . OPERIS . PORTVS
CAVSSA . EMISSISQVE . IN . MARE . VRBEM
INVNDATIONIS . PERICVLO . LIBERAVIT.

no doubt far fallen from her former greatness, impoverished by five centuries of competition with the superior advantages of Portus; but it was still a considerable commercial city: and Portus, except so far as the war itself had injured its commerce, was probably well-nigh as busy as in the days of Claudius. The great magazines stood there, all waiting for the corn-supplies of the Roman people, if only the light cruisers of Totila would allow them to be filled. The walls with which Constantine had enclosed the city and harbour, now mere grass mounds over which the horses gallop in their play, were then defensible fortifications, probably from twelve to fifteen feet high. Within the enclosure of these walls, which were about a mile and a-half in length, and flanked by the river and the sea, lay the army of Belisarius, who now again, as in his earlier campaigns, was accompanied by the martial Antonina. It is important to remember the difference between the position of the combatants in 537 and in the present siege. Then, Ostia was held by the Romans, and Portus was a Gothic stronghold. Now, Portus is the one place of vantage left to the Romans in the neighbourhood of the capital, and Ostia is occupied by a Gothic garrison.

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The river barred.

The town of Portus was nineteen Roman miles[1] from Rome. About four miles above it, where the river was narrowest, Totila had caused a boom to be placed to block the passage of ships bearing provisions to the starving city. This boom consisted of long beams of timber lashed together and forming a kind of floating bridge. It was protected by a wooden tower at either end, and was yet further strengthened by an

[1] Equivalent to 17½ English miles.

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iron chain stretched across from shore to shore a little below it, in order to prevent the boom from being broken by the mere impact of a hostile vessel.

Preparations of Belisarius for forcing the passage.

The counter-preparations of Belisarius were very complete. Having lashed together two broad barges, he erected a wooden tower upon them sufficiently high to overtop the bridge. Trusting nothing to chance, he had the measurements of the bridge taken by two of his soldiers who feigned themselves deserters. To the top of the tower a boat was hoisted filled with a combustible mixture, pitch, sulphur, rosin, an anticipation of the dreaded 'Greek fire' of later ages. Surrounding the barges, and partly towing them, was a fleet of two hundred swift cutters[1] laden with corn and other necessaries for the starving Romans, but also bearing some of the bravest of his soldiers, and turned into ships of war by high wooden ramparts on the decks, pierced with loop-holes for the archers. Detachments of infantry and cavalry were also stationed at all the points of vantage on the bank to support the operations of the ships, and especially to prevent any advance of the enemy upon Portus.

Isaac of Armenia in charge of Portus.

Having made these preparations, Belisarius entrusted the defence of the sea-port, containing as it did all his stores, his reserve troops, and above all his wife, to Isaac of Armenia, with a solemn charge that come what might, and even should he hear that Belisarius himself had fallen before the foe, under no conceivable circumstances was he to leave the post thus committed to him. At the same time he sent word to Bessas to support his movements by a vigorous sortie from the city against the Gothic camps. This message how-

[1] *dromones.*

ever, like so many others of the same kind, failed to shake the 'masterly inactivity' of the governor of Rome. The Goths had full leisure that day to concentrate their whole attention on the operations of Belisarius.

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Bessas will not co-operate.

Successful attack on the Gothic bridge.

With some labour the rowers urged the laden cutters up the river. The Goths, confiding in the strength of their bridge and chain, remained quiet in their camps. Soon they found out their error. The archers from the cutters dealt such havock among the Gothic guards on either shore that resistance was quelled and they were able to sever the chain[1] and sail on in triumph up to the bridge. Now the Goths perceived the danger and swarmed down upon the bridge. The fighting here became terrific. Belisarius, watching his opportunity, steered the floating tower close up to the Gothic fort commanding the north end of the bridge, which stood close to the water's edge. The boat laden with Greek fire was set alight and skilfully thrown into the very middle of the fort, which was at once wrapped in flames. In the conflagration two hundred of the Gothic garrison, headed by Osdas, the bravest of the brave, all perished. Encouraged by this success, the archers on board the *dromones* sent a yet thicker shower of arrows at the Goths on the shore. Terror seized the barbarian ranks; they turned to flee; the Romans began to hew the timbers of the bridge to pieces; the revictualling of the hungry city seemed already accomplished.

Isaac ruins all by an unsuccessful attack on Ostia.

Seemed only. By one of those tricks of Fate upon which our historian delights to moralise, in the very moment when he seemed to have won her, Victory

[1] Did they employ divers? Procopius does not mention them.

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flitted away out of the grasp of Belisarius. A rumour, perhaps a premature rumour, of the success of the morning's operations, especially of the severing of the chain, reached the ears of Isaac at Portus. Forgetful of his general's solemn charge, and only envious at having no share in the glory of the triumph, he sallied forth with a hundred horsemen, crossed the Insula Sacra, and suddenly attacked the Gothic garrison of Ostia, who were commanded by the gallant Roderic. In the first skirmish Roderic was wounded, and his soldiers, whether from fear or guile, turned and fled. The Imperialists entered the camp, and found a store of money and other valuables therein, which they began to plunder. While they were thus engaged the Goths returned in greater numbers, easily overpowered the hundred Romans, slew the greater number of them, and took the rest, among whom was Isaac himself, prisoners.

Belisarius bewildered by the tidings of Isaac's failure.

The mere failure of this foolish attack would have been it itself no great disaster. But as adverse Fortune would have it, a messenger escaped from the field and bore the tidings to Belisarius at the bridge, 'Isaac is taken.' 'Isaac taken,' thought the General: 'then Portus and Antonina are taken too.' At this thought, says the historian, 'he was bewildered with fear, a thing which had never happened to him in any previous peril.' Yet even this bewilderment is for us the most convincing proof that they were chains of love, not of fear, which yet bound him to Antonina. He at once gave the signal for retreat, in the hope that by a speedy return he might surprise the victorious barbarians and rescue Portus from their grasp. When he reached the seaport (which it is to be re-

membered was only four miles from the scene of action), found all safe there, and recognised by what folly of his subordinate and what mis-reading of the game by himself he had been cheated out of an already-assured victory, he was seized with such deep chagrin, that his bodily strength, perhaps already weakened by the unwholesome air of the Campagna, quite broke down. He sickened with fever, which at one time caused his life to be despaired of, and for some months he was unable to take any active share in the conduct of the campaign.

546. His retreat and subsequent illness.

Two days after this battle Roderic the governor of Ostia died, and Totila, enraged at the loss of his brave comrade, put his feeble Armenian captive to death—a deed not worthy of his fame [1].

Demoralisation of the garrison in Rome.

Meanwhile, in Rome, there was a daily increasing demoralisation among the soldiers of the garrison. Procopius attributes this entirely to the avarice of Bessas, who according to him was so intent on his traffic in corn at famine-prices to the few still remaining citizens, that he neglected all the duties of a general, and purposely refused to co-operate with Belisarius, knowing that the more the siege could be prolonged, the richer he would grow. It is almost certain that there is some exaggeration here. Bessas was a sufficiently capable soldier to know that if no watch were kept on the walls the city would be taken, and that then even the treasure for the sake of which he had committed so many crimes would with difficulty

[1] If, as is very probable, the slain Goth was the same Roderic of whom Pope Gregory speaks (cap. xiv) as a constant attendant upon the King's person, we can understand the especial resentment of the latter at the death of his faithful servant.

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be saved from the enemy. Perhaps the true explanation of his conduct is this. He saw the fame which Belisarius had acquired by his year-long defence of Rome and determined to rival it. The secret of *that* success had been the refusal to spend the strength of the soldiers on useless sorties, and Bessas showed that he had laid that lesson to heart. But there were two reasons for his failure. In Totila he had to deal with a very different adversary from the blundering Witigis, with an adversary who was also determined to waste none of his strength on useless assaults, who never hurried himself, but who by a slow, patient, scientific blockade consumed the life of Rome. And, what was even more important, the noble heart of Belisarius had saved him from that crime of callous indifference to the sufferings of non-combatants which Bessas forsooth gloried in, as showing his soldier-like disregard of all that did not bear on the success of the great game, but which really lost him the great game itself. No doubt he enriched himself by sales of corn at famine-prices to the Senators. None of these barbarian and semi-barbarian generals of Byzantium had any refined feelings of honour where money was concerned. But this can hardly have been his sole thought. He had a plan for the defence of Rome which he thought he could work out independently of the welfare or the sufferings of the citizens. And in that thought he was wrong even from the military point of view. Without the loyal help of the great mass of citizens it was impossible to keep the vast circuit of the walls effectually guarded, and one unguarded spot, on one dark night, might make all other precautions useless.

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546.

Procopius on the conduct of Bessas.

So much by way of necessary protest before quoting the words of Procopius. 'Neither in the attack on the bridge, nor at any previous time, would Bessas assist as he was required to do. For he had still some corn stored up, since the supplies previously sent to Rome by the magistrates of Sicily had been intended both for the soldiers and the citizens; but he, giving forth a very small quantity to the citizens, kept the largest part concealed, nominally on behalf of the soldiers, but really that he might retail it to the Senators at a high price. Of course therefore the end of the siege was the thing which he least desired[1].' 'By his transactions in corn Bessas was growing ever richer, since the necessity of the buyers allowed him to fix the price according to his own fancy. Being wholly immersed in this business, he took no thought as to the watch upon the walls or any other measure of precaution, but if the soldiers chose to be remiss he allowed them to be so. Hence there were but few sentinels on the walls, and those very careless about their duty. The sentinel on guard at any given time might indulge, if he pleased, in long slumbers, since there was no one set over him to call him to account. There were none to go the rounds, as aforetime, to challenge the sentinels and ascertain what they were doing. Nor could any of the citizens assist in this work of vigilance; for, as I have before said, those who were now left in the City were very few in number and terribly reduced in strength[2].'

According to the view suggested above, these last words of the historian contain the gist of the whole

[1] De Bell. Gotth. iii. 18 (pp. 356–7).

[2] Ibid. iii. 20 (p. 360).

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matter. The rest of the description does but pourtray the condition of a garrison demoralised by being set to perform a duty hopelessly beyond their powers.

Porta Asinaria.

The Asinarian Gate—by which it may be remembered Belisarius entered Rome in December 536—yet stands, with its two round towers, behind the Church of the Lateran, one of the finest monuments of the great defensive work of Aurelian and Honorius. The gateway itself is blocked up, and the mediaeval Porta S. Giovanni, a few yards to the east of it, now opens upon the great highway to Albano, Capua, and Naples. Notwithstanding this alteration, however, there is still a lofty and well-preserved piece of the ancient wall, and nowhere do we find a better specimen than here, of the galleries through which the sentinels went their rounds, of the loopholes through which the archers shot, of the battlements by which the more exposed warriors above were partially defended. Upon this part of the wall there was a *vigilia* of four Isaurian soldiers, who, tired of the siege, disgusted with their failing food, and mindful very probably of the kindness with which Totila had treated them after the capture of Naples [1], resolved to betray the City to the Gothic King. Letting themselves down by ropes from the battlements, they sought the camp of the barbarians and unfolded their design to Totila. He thanked them warmly, offered them large sums of money if the City should be put in his power, and sent two of his guards to view the place where the Isaurians kept watch. The men climbed up by the ropes, inspected

Treachery of the Isaurian sentinels.

[1] It will be remembered that the garrison of Naples was composed of 1000 *Isaurian* soldiers under Conon, and that Totila graciously assisted them on their journey to Rome. (See p. 405.)



PORTA ASINARIA

From a Photograph in J. H. Parker's Series]

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Totila's caution.

the fortifications, heard all that the Isaurians had to say, and returned to report favourably of the project. There was something about the Isaurians' demeanour, however, which had roused the King's suspicion, and a second and even a third visit from them (their return being each time accompanied by some of his own followers to examine the walls) was necessary before he would trust his army in their hands. This extreme caution on the part of the daring Totila had well-nigh proved fatal to the scheme. It chanced that the Roman scouts brought as captives into the City ten Gothic soldiers, who, being interrogated as to what Totila was meditating next, were foolish enough or disloyal enough to disclose, what had now become the talk of the camp, that he hoped to get possession of the city by the help of some Isaurians. Happily, however, Bessas and Conon paid no further attention to the story, which was perhaps too vague to guide them to the very Isaurians who were meditating treason.

The Asinarian Gate opened to the Goths, 17 Dec. 546[1].

When the third deputation, headed by a kinsman of Totila himself, had returned, reporting favourably of the Isaurians' proposal, the King at length made up his mind to accept the venture. At nightfall the whole Gothic host, fully armed, was drawn up outside the Asinarian Gate. Four Goths, men conspicuous for valour and strength, mounted by ropes to the place where the friendly Isaurians were on guard, the other Roman sentinels being all wrapped in slumber. As soon as they were within the walls they hastened to the gateway. With rapid well-directed blows from their axes they severed the great bar of wood which

[1] We get this date from two sources; the day and month from Marcellinus Comes, the year from Procopius.

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kept the gates closed, and shattered the iron locks, the keys of which were of course in other keeping[1]. The work must have been speedily done, for the noise of blows like those would break the sleep of even the most over-wearied sentinels. Then they opened wide the gates, and without difficulty or opposition, without striking a blow except at bolts and bars, the whole Gothic army marched in.

After all, it seemed, the hundred and fifty thousand warriors who in the long siege left their bones under the grass of the Campagna had not died in vain. The 'hoarded vengeance' of ten years might at length be reaped. The Goths were again in Rome.

[1] Καὶ τό τε ξύλον πελέκεσι διαφθείρουσιν, ᾧπερ ἐνέρσει τοίχου ἑκατέρου ἐναρμοσθέντι τὰς πύλας ἐπιζευγνύναι εἰώθεισαν, τά τε σιδήρια ξύμπαντα, οἷς δὴ τὰς κλεῖς ἀεὶ οἱ φύλακες ἐμβαλλόμενοι ἔκλειόν τε τὰς πύλας καὶ κατὰ τὴν χρείαν ἀνέῳγον.

CHAPTER XIX.

ROMA CAPTA.

'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!'

Authority.

Source :—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 20–22 (pp. 362–373).

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Entry of the Goths into Rome.

WHEN the Goths had entered by the Asinarian Gate, Totila, still fearful of some treachery, caused them all to halt in good order till day-light dawned. Meanwhile, universal uproar and confusion reigned in the panic-stricken City. The three thousand Imperial soldiers streamed out of the Flaminian Gate [1], even as the Gothic garrison had done ten years before. Bessas and Conon were mingled with the crowd of fugitives, not being compelled by any exaggerated sense of honour to die upon the scene of their discomfiture. The best proof that Bessas was indeed taken unawares is furnished by the fact that all the treasure which he had accumulated at the cost of so much human suffering was left behind in his palace and fell into the hands of the Gothic King. Before the night had ended a messenger came in haste to tell the King of the flight of the Governor and his army. 'Excellent

Flight of Bessas and Conon.

[1] Διὰ πύλης τῆς ἑτέρας probably means this, though they *might* escape to Portus by the Porta Portuensis.

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tidings!' said Totila. 'No! I will not pursue after them. What more delightful news could any one wish for than to hear that his enemies are fleeing?' Of the Roman nobles, a few who were fortunate enough to possess horses accompanied the flight of the army: the rest sought shelter in the various churches. Among the refugees we find the names of Decius and Basilius, the former perhaps descended from the Emperor[1] and from the great Decii of the Republic, the latter probably the same nobleman whom we have already taken note of as the last Roman Consul[2]. Among the suppliants at the altars the names of Maximus[3], Olybrius[4], and Orestes[5] also remind us, truly or falsely, of men eminent in the struggles of the preceding century.

Ravages of the Gothic soldiery.

When day dawned, Totila proceeded to St. Peter's basilica to return thanks to God for his victory. His soldiers roamed through the city, slaying and plundering. One horror usually accompanying the sack of a captured city was absent. No Roman maid, wife, or widow suffered the least insult from any of the Gothic soldiery, so strict were the orders of Totila on this point, and so little did his subjects dare to disobey him. The plunder of the Roman palaces was, however, freely permitted to them, on the somewhat ambiguous condition that the most valuable of the property—meaning probably silver, gold, and jewels—was to be brought to the King to form the nucleus of a new great Gothic hoard.

[1] Vol. i. pp. 52–55.

[2] P. 374, and Usener, Anecdoton Holderi, p. 14. His full name was Anicius Faustus Albinus Basilius.

[3] Vol. ii. pp. 199–208.

[4] Vol. ii. pp. 476–477.

[5] Vol. ii. pp. 496–522.

546. Totila at St. Peter's. Interview with Pelagius.

Thus then, amid the noise and confusion of the plunder of a mighty city, amid the shouts of the slayers and the groans of the dying, Totila proceeded to the great basilica on the Vatican. Arrived there, he found the deacon Pelagius awaiting him, bearing a roll of the Sacred Scriptures and expressing in every gesture the humility of a suppliant. 'Spare thine own subjects, O our Master[1]!' said the submissive ecclesiastic. With a scoff which he could not forbear at the haughty demeanour of Pelagius on the occasion of their last meeting, Totila said, 'Now, then, thou art willing to make requests of me.' 'Yes,' said Pelagius, 'since God hath made me thy slave. But spare thy slaves, Master! henceforward.' Totila listened to the request, and at once sent messengers all through the City, saying that, though the plunder might continue, no more blood was to be shed. Already, twenty-six soldiers and sixty citizens had fallen under the swords of the Goths. The smallness of these numbers points rather to the depopulation of the City than to the humanity of the conquerors. Procopius was informed that only five hundred citizens were left in Rome, the greater part of whom had fled to the churches; nor does there seem any reason for supposing that he has underestimated this number, notwithstanding the vast contrast with the many myriads who once thronged the streets of the Eternal City[2].

[1] 'Φείδου τῶν σῶν, ὦ δέσποτα' εἶπε. There is surely an allusion here to the words, 'Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach' (Joel ii. 17). The context of the verse gives great emphasis to the quotation.

[2] Gibbon says (v. 222, ed. Smith): 'The assertion that only five hundred persons [citizens] remained in the capital inspires some doubt of the fidelity either of his narrative or of his text.'

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Condition of the surviving citizens.

The condition of the survivors of the Roman people was so miserable that death from the Gothic broad-sword might seem in comparison scarcely an evil to be dreaded. Proud Senators and their delicately nurtured wives, clothed in the garb of peasants and of slaves, wandered about from house to house, knocking at the doors and craving from the charity of the Gothic warriors a morsel of food to keep the life within them. Among these abject suppliants was one whose tale seems to carry us back for two generations. Rusticiana, the daughter of Symmachus and the widow of Boethius, yet lived, and in these darkest days of her country she had distinguished herself by the generosity with which she had devoted her wealth to the relief of her starving fellow-citizens. She too was now a humble petitioner for a morsel of bread. When the Goths discovered who she was, many of them clamoured that she should be slain, the chief crime of which she was accused being that she had given money to the Roman generals as the price of their consent to the destruction of the statues of Theodoric. Her resentment against the sovereign who had put her husband and father to death is easily understood: but it is not probable that either Belisarius or Bessas would require much persuasion to induce them to sanction the destruction of the visible emblems of the great Ostrogoth. True or false as the story might be, Totila refused to allow Rusticiana to be molested on account of it, and gave strict orders that the venerable lady should be treated

The widow of Boethius.

But it seems to me that the whole earlier and later course of his narrative agrees well enough with this statement. Of course all these statistical assertions require to be received with a good deal of caution.

with all courtesy. We hear nothing more concerning her, and with this incident the family of Boethius passes out of history.

Totila's harangue to the Goths.

On the day after the capture of the City, Totila addressed two very different harangues to two very different audiences. The Goths were all gathered together,—surely in the same Forum which once echoed Cicero's denunciations against Catiline, and Antony's praises of the murdered Julius:—and here their King congratulated them on an event which he almost described in Cromwell's words as 'a crowning mercy,' so urgently did he insist on the truth that it was not by human strength, but by God's manifest blessing on the righteous cause, that the victory had been won. 'At the beginning of the war, 200,000 valiant Goths, rich in money, in arms, in horses, and with numbers of prudent veterans to guide their counsels[1], lost empire, life, liberty, to a little band of 7000 Greeks. Now, from more than 20,000 of the same enemies[2], a scanty remnant of the nation, poor, despised, utterly devoid of experience, had wrested the great prize of the war. Why this difference? Because aforetime the Goths, putting justice last in their thoughts, committed, against the subject Romans and one another, all sorts of unholy deeds: but now they had been striving to act righteously towards all men.

[1] *Καὶ γερόντων ξυνετωτάτων πολὺν ὅμιλον, ὅπερ τοῖς ἐς ἀγῶνας καθισταμένοις ξυμφορώτατον εἶναι δοκεῖ.* Possibly, like the English in the Crimea, the followers of Witigis were overweighted with the experience of veteran soldiers.

[2] This is no doubt the sum total of the Imperial troops in Italy, not in Rome, the number of the latter being, as we know, 3000. I think this is the only indication that we have of the size of the Imperial army at this time.

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In this resolution, even at the risk of wearying them, he besought them to continue. For if they changed, assuredly God's favour towards them would change likewise, since it is not this race or that nation, as such, on whose side God fights, but He assists all men everywhere who honour the precepts of eternal righteousness[1].'

Totila's harangue to the Senate.

It is not without a feeling of pain that we pass from the Forum to the Senate House, and listen to the bitter words with which the Gothic King rebuked the cowering Senators of Rome. He reminded them of all the benefits which they had received at the hands of Theodoric and Athalaric; how these Kings had left in their keeping all the great offices of state and had permitted them to accumulate boundless wealth[2]; and yet after all this they had turned against their benefactors and brought Greeks into the common fatherland. 'What harm did the Goths ever do you? And now tell me, what good have you ever received from Justinian the Emperor? Has he not taken away from you almost all the great offices of state? Has he not insulted and oppressed you by means of the men who are called his Logothetes? Has he not compelled you to give an account to him of every *solidus* which you received from the public funds even under the Gothic

[1] *Οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώπων γένει οὐδὲ φύσει ἐθνῶν ξυμμαχεῖν εἴωθεν* [ὁ θεός], *ἀλλ' οἷς ἂν μᾶλλον ὁ τοῦ δικαίου λόγος τιμῷτο.* Golden words, whether Totila or Procopius be the true author of them, and an admirable answer to the war-cry of some modern politicians, 'Our country, right or wrong.'

[2] The words are important as a description of Theodoric's system of government: *Πολλὰ πρός τε Θευδερίχου καὶ Ἀταλαρίχου ἀγαθὰ πεπονθότες, ἐπί τε τῆς ἀρχῆς ἁπάσης αὐτοὶ ἐς ἀεὶ καταστάντες καὶ τήν τε πολιτείαν διοικησάμενοι, πλούτου τε περιβεβλημένοι μέγα τι χρῆμα.*

Kings? All harassed and impoverished as you are by the war, has he not compelled you to pay to the Greeks the full taxes which could be levied in a time of profoundest peace?' With words like these, the boldness of which astonishes us in a subject of Justinian, though he does put them into the mouth of a Gothic King[1], did Totila lash the wincing Senators even as an angry master scolds his slaves. Then, pointing to Herodian, the former Roman General, and to the four Isaurian deserters, 'These men,' he said, 'strangers and aliens, have done for us what you our fellow-citizens[2] failed to do. Herodian received us into Spoleto, the Isaurians into Rome. Wherefore they, our friends, shall be received into the places of trust and honour, and you henceforward shall be treated as slaves.'

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Pelagius sent to Constantinople.

Not a single Senator dared to make an answer to this torrent of upbraiding. Pelagius, however, soothed the wrath of Totila, begged him to have compassion on the fallen, and obtained from him a promise of kinder treatment than his speech had foreshadowed. The Deacon, who had evidently acquired considerable influence over the mind of Totila, was now (after solemnly swearing speedily to return) sent to Constantinople, in company with a Roman orator named Theodore, to propose terms of peace.

Totila's letter to Justinian.

The letter which they bore was in the following words: 'I shall keep silence about the events which have happened in the City of the Romans, because

[1] And this hinted disapprobation of the Emperor's government in the *De Bellis* is a strong confirmation of the genuineness of the *Anecdota*.

[2] Ὑμεῖς ξύντροφοι Γότθοις γεγενημένοι.

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I think you will have already heard them from other quarters. But I will tell you shortly why I have sent these ambassadors. I pray you to secure for yourself and to grant to us the blessings of peace. You and I have excellent memorials and models in Anastasius and Theodoric, who reigned not long ago, and who filled their own lives and those of their subjects with peace and all prosperity. If this request should be consented to by you, I shall look upon you as a father, and gladly be your ally in whatsoever expedition you may meditate.' The written courtesies of the letter were supplemented by a verbal threat, that if the Emperor would not consent to peace, the Eternal City should be rased to the ground, and Totila, with his triumphant Goths, would invade the provinces of Illyricum. The only reply, however, which Justinian deigned to make to either courtesies or threats was that Belisarius had full powers for the conduct of the war and any proposals for peace must be addressed to him.

Justinian refers him to Belisarius.

Totila's presence required in Lucania.

Meanwhile the war in Lucania, under the guidance of Tullianus, who had gathered the peasants of the province round him, was being prosecuted with some vigour. Three hundred Antae, wild mountaineers from the hills of Bosnia[1], were holding the fastnesses of the Apennines against all comers, and successfully repulsed some followers of Totila who were sent to dislodge them. The Gothic King was desirous to transfer his operations to the South of Italy, but feared either to weaken his army by leaving a garrison in Rome, or to

[1] Probably. They were neighbours of the Slovenes (see Procop. De B. G. iii. 14), but one cannot pretend to locate these Illyrian tribes with perfect accuracy.

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546.

One-third of the walls of Rome demolished.

give Belisarius, still lying sick at Portus, the chance of recovering it if left ungarrisoned. In these circumstances, from no blind rage against the prostrate City, but simply as a matter of strategy, he decided to make it untenable and uninhabitable. He threw down large portions of the walls, so that it was roughly computed[1] that only two-thirds of the line of defence remained standing. He was about to proceed to burn all the finest buildings in Rome, and turn the City by the Tiber into a sheep-walk, when ambassadors were announced who brought a letter from Belisarius.

Belisarius persuades Totila not to destroy the City.

'Fair cities,' said the General, 'are the glory of the great men who have been their founders, and surely no wise man would wish to be remembered as the destroyer of any of them. But of all cities under the sun Rome is confessed to be the greatest and the most glorious. No one man, no single century reared her greatness. A long line of kings and emperors, the united efforts of some of the noblest of men, a vast interval of time, a lavish expenditure of wealth, the most costly materials and the most skilful craftsmen of the world, have all united to make Rome. Slowly and gradually has each succeeding age there reared its monuments. Any act, therefore, of wanton outrage against that City will be resented as an injustice by all men of all ages, by those who have gone before us, because it effaces the memorials of their greatness, by

[1] Ὅσον ἐς τριτημόριον τοῦ παντὸς μάλιστα. I have no doubt that this is a very loose and conjectural statement; and it is probable that a careful survey of the wall, assigning to each part its approximate date, would greatly reduce the proportion of wall destroyed by Totila. The analogy to the proceedings of Gaiseric in Africa (vol. ii. p. 537) will naturally suggest itself to the reader.

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those who shall come after, since the most wonderful sight in the world will be no longer theirs to look upon. Remember too, that this war must end either in the Emperor's victory or your own. If you should prove to be the conqueror, how great will be your delight in having preserved the most precious jewel of your crown. If yours should turn out to be the losing side, great will be the thanks due from the conqueror for your preservation of Rome, while its destruction would make every plea for mercy and humanity on your behalf inadmissible. And last of all comes the question what shall be your own eternal record in history, whether you will be remembered as the preserver or the destroyer of the greatest city in the world.'

Belisarius, in writing this letter, had not miscalculated the temper of his antagonist. Totila read it over and over again, laid its warnings to heart, and dismissed the ambassadors with the assurance that he would do no further damage to the monuments of the Eternal City. He then withdrew the greater part of his troops to Mount Algidus[1], a shoulder of the high Alban mount, about twenty miles south-east of Rome, and marched himself into Lucania to prosecute the war against John and his eager ally Tullianus. The Senators had to follow in his train, unwilling hostages. Their wives and children were sent to the chief cities

Totila evacuates Rome, but does not destroy it.

[1] It seems necessary to translate Ἀλγηδῶν Algidus, but the topographical indications do not fit. Procopius describes it as west of Rome, whereas Algidus is a little south of east: and though from that high vantage-ground the troops might observe Belisarius at Portus, they were surely too distant to impose any effectual check on his movements (ὅπως δὴ μηδεμιᾷ μηχανῇ δυνατὰ εἴη τοῖς ἀμφὶ Βελισάριον ἔξω πῃ τοῦ Πόρτου ἰέναι).

of Campania. Rome herself, though not ruined, was left without a single inhabitant. BOOK V. CH. 19.

The archaeologist who reads how narrowly Rome thus escaped destruction at the hands of Totila may, at first, almost regret that he was prevented from carrying his purpose into effect. There would then, so he thinks, have been one mighty conflagration, in which all that was of wood must have perished, but which the mighty walls of temple and palace would assuredly have survived. Then the City would have become a wilderness of grass-grown mounds, amid which the shepherd of the Campagna might have wandered while his goats nibbled the short grass in the halls of Emperors and Consuls. The successive sieges by Lombard, Norman, and German, the havoc wrought by ignorant feudal barons, the yet worse havoc of statue-hunting Papal Nephews, the slow but ceaseless ruin effected by the 'little citizens' of Rome, whose squalid habitations burrowed into the foundations of temple and forum and theatre, the detestable industry of the lime-kilns, which for ten centuries were perpetually burning into mortar the noblest monuments of Greek and Roman art,—all this would have been avoided, and the buried city might have lain hidden for twelve centuries, till another Layard or another Schliemann revealed its wonders to a generation capable of understanding and appreciating them. 546. Would it have been better for archaeology if Totila had laid the City in ruins?

But no: this could never have been. The religious memories which clustered around Rome were too mighty to allow of her ever being thus utterly deserted. If Rome herself in the plenitude of her power could not obliterate Jerusalem, much less could the Northern barbarians cause Rome to be forgotten. The successor She must have been rebuilt.

BOOK V. CH. 19. 546. of St. Peter must inevitably have come back to the tombs of the Fisherman and the Tent-maker; pilgrims from all the countries of the West must have flocked to the scenes of the saints' martyrdoms; convents and hostelries must again have risen by the Tiber; and in the course of centuries, if not of a few generations, another city, not very unlike the Rome of the Middle Ages, would have covered the space of the marble-strewn sheep-walk left by Totila[1].

[1] The view here urged of the practical indestructibility of Rome is strongly supported by the somewhat similar case of Aquileia. If ever an ancient city was thoroughly destroyed, Aquileia was thus destroyed by Attila: and as a city of commercial or political importance she never did rise again. But ecclesiastically the city revived, and the Patriarch of Aquileia was for centuries one of the most important personages in the countries of the Hadriatic.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RE-OCCUPATION OF ROME.

Authorities.

Sources:—

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 22–30 (pp. 372–405). BOOK V. CH. 20.

For the later history of Belisarius, the close of the Fifth Book of AGATHIAS, the younger contemporary and continuer of Procopius: THEOPHANES (758–816), and the authorities quoted in the Note at the end of the chapter.

AFTER the capture of Rome a space of a month or two elapsed marked by no great operations on either side [1]. 546–547.

Totila marches into Lucania.

Totila, as has been said, marched into Lucania dragging the Senators in his train. By their orders the peasants (*coloni*) upon the senatorial estates laid down their arms, and Lucania was for a time recovered by the Goths. The Senators were then sent to rejoin their wives and children in the cities of Campania,

[1] The notes of time given by Procopius for the eleventh year of the war (546–547) are exceedingly indistinct. But Marcellinus Comes tells us that Totila, by the craft of the Isaurians, entered Rome on the 17th of December [546]. As he speaks of Rome lying desolate forty days after Totila's devastations, we may probably put its recapture by Belisarius about the 9th of February, 547, allowing fourteen days for Totila's occupation of the City.

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547.

where they dwelt under a strong Gothic guard. Totila pitched his camp first on the high hill of 'windy Garganus,' jutting out into the Hadriatic Sea. Here, according to Procopius, he occupied the very same lines of entrenchment which had been defended by the troops of Hannibal during the Second Punic War[1].

Spoleto lost to the Goths.

Spoleto, which had been won by the treachery of Herodian, was lost to the Goths by the treachery of Martian, a feigned deserter who won the favour of Totila, obtained the command of the fortress which had been made out of the amphitheatre adjoining the town, and handed it over to some Imperial troops invited thither from Perugia[2]. By the loss of this position the Goths' free use of the Flaminian Way was doubtless somewhat interfered with[3].

John at Tarentum.

John sallied forth from his stronghold at Hydruntum and occupied Tarentum, which, though situated on the sea-coast, by its position at the head of its own gulf afforded nearer access into the heart of Apulia. He prudently narrowed his line of defence[4], abandoning

[1] Ἐν τῷ Ἀννίβα τοῦ Λίβυος χαρακώματι στρατοπεδευσάμενος, ἡσυχῇ ἔμενεν. I have not found that any other writer speaks of an encampment of Hannibal on Mount Garganus. Is it possible that Procopius is thinking of Totila's other camp on Mount Algidus, which is not far from the site still pointed out as that of the Campo di Annibale, near Monte Cavo?

[2] The commander of these troops at Perugia was now 'Oldogandon the Hun.'

[3] Not absolutely taken from them, since, for this part of the way, there was the alternative route by the uplands of Mevania.

[4] Procopius's description of John's proceedings at Tarentum (p. 376) is illustrated in an interesting way by the alterations in the camps on the Roman Wall in Northumberland, where gateways have been blocked up or reduced in size in order to make the camps tenable by a smaller force than that for which they were at first intended.

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all that part of the town which lay outside the isthmus, and here took up a position of considerable strength. Totila, as a counter-move, quartered four hundred men at Acherontia[1], a high hill-city on the borders of Lucania and Apulia, a well-chosen position for the over-awing of both provinces. He then marched away towards the north, to menace Ravenna, but was soon recalled by tidings as unwelcome as they were unexpected.

Rome in her desertion.

For the space of six weeks or more after its evacuation by Totila, Rome had been left, we are told, absolutely empty of inhabitants[2]. Few comparatively of the cities and towns in her world-wide dominion had to pass through this strange experience of an absolute cessation of the life which had beat in them for centuries. This breach in the continuity of her history, short as it was, makes Rome the companion in adversity of Eburacum and Deva and the other 'waste Chesters' of our own island, and puts her to that extent in a different category from cities like Paris, Lyons, and we may perhaps add Augsburg and Cologne, in which the daily routine of civil life has gone on without

[1] The 'bird's nest of lofty Acherontia,' as Horace calls it, is situated in the neighbourhood of Mons Vultur, and about fifteen miles from the poet's birth-place, Venusia. His description of himself (Sat. II. i. 34-35)—

'Lucanus an Appulus anceps,
Nam Venusinus arat finem sub utrumque colonus'—

would be even more applicable to an inhabitant of Acherontia.

[2] 'Suffering not a single person to remain in Rome, but leaving her absolutely desolate,' are the words of Procopius. 'After which devastation,' says Marcellinus Comes, 'for forty days or more Rome was so desolate that no one, either man or beast, remained there.'

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interruption from the first or second century after Christ till modern days.

547. Belisarius visits Rome and decides to re-occupy it.

As soon as Belisarius was able to rise from the bed on which his fever had prostrated him at Portus, he was possessed with a desire to see for himself the extent of ruin at Rome; and then there gradually took shape in his mind a scheme for the recovery of the City, so bold and original that it at first seemed like a dream of delirium, but was soon recognised by those who beheld its accomplishment as a master-stroke of genius[1]. His first reconnaissance of the City, made with only one thousand soldiers, was interfered with by the Goths from Mount Algidus, who were, however, defeated in the skirmish which followed. On his second visit, made with all the troops under his command, except a small garrison left at Portus, the march was accomplished without any such interruption. He had decided in his own mind that the rents in the line of defence made by Totila, though great, were not irreparable. All his own soldiers, and all the people from the country round who flocked into Rome, attracted both by the spell of her undying name and by the abundant market for provisions which the General immediately established there, were set to work to rebuild the breaches in the walls. There was no lime; there could be no pretence of regularity in the work. Great blocks of tufa from the old wall of Servius, where these were nigh at hand[2], where they were not, rubble of any kind that could be had, were thrust into

[1] Βελισαρίῳ δὲ τόλμα προμηθὴς τότε γέγονεν, ἀρχὴν μὲν μανιώδης δόξασα εἶναι τοῖς τε ὁρῶσι καὶ ἀκούουσι πρῶτον, ἐκβᾶσα δὲ ἐς ἀρετῆς ἔργον ὑψηλόν τε καὶ δαιμονίως ὑπέρογκον.

[2] Procopius does not mention this fact, but it is abundantly

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the interstices. The fosse which had been dug for the first siege was fortunately still unfilled, and a rough palisade of stakes was now added to the fosse[1]. So eagerly did all work that in the space of fifteen days the whole circuit of the walls was in some fashion or other repaired; only the gates which Totila had destroyed could not be replaced for want of skilled workmen in the City. So great and so rapid a work of national defence, accomplished by the willing labour of soldiers and citizens, had perhaps never been seen, since Dionysius in twenty days raised those mighty fortifications which we still see surrounding, but at how great a distance, the dwindled city of Syracuse[2]. B.C. 402.

Totila returns and attacks the garrison of Rome.

When Totila heard the news of the re-occupation of Rome he marched thither with all the speed of anger and mortification. His army bivouacked along the banks of the Tiber, and at sunrise on the day after their arrival, with wrath and clamour attacked the defenders of the wall. The battle lasted from dawn till dark, and was fought with all the obstinacy which the one party could draw from their rage, the other from their despair. To make up for the absence of gates, Belisarius stationed all his bravest champions in the gateways, there, like Horatius, to keep the foe at bay by the might of their arms alone. His less trustworthy troops, and perhaps some of the civic population, were ranged upon the walls, and from their superior elevation dealt deadly damage on the barbarians.

evident to any one who examines the walls that such a transference has taken place at some time, and no time is more likely than that with which we are now dealing.

[1] Again we have to notice the combination of ditch and palisade, so well illustrating the German term *Pfahlgraben*.

[2] Diodorus, xiv. 18.

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547. He is repulsed.

When night fell the besiegers withdrew from the attack, forced to confess to one another that it was a failure. While they were tending their wounded, and repairing their broken weapons, the Romans were further strengthening their defence by planting caltrops (*tribuli*) in all the gateways. These instruments, minutely described by Procopius, were made of four spikes of wood or iron, so fastened together at one end that however the *tribulus* was thrown, there would always be three of the spikes resting securely on the ground and the fourth projecting upwards—an effectual precaution, as Robert Bruce proved at Bannockburn, against a charge of hostile cavalry.

Second attack.

Next day the Goths again made a fierce assault, and were again repulsed. The besieged made a vigorous sally, but pursuing too far were in some danger of being surrounded and cut to pieces. They were rescued, however, by another sally. ordered by Belisarius, and the barbarians retired.

Third attack.

Successful sally of the Romans.

Some days passed, and again the Goths rushed with fury to the walls. Again the Roman champions sallied forth—from the absence of gates it was probably hard to resist without making a sortie—and again they got the best of the conflict. The standard-bearer of Totila fell stricken by a mortal blow, and the royal ensign drooped in the dust. Then followed a Homeric combat round the dead man's body. The barbarians by a sword-stroke through the wrist succeeded in rescuing the left hand, which still grasped the standard, and was adorned with a gay armlet of gold. The rest of the body was seized and stripped of its armour by the Romans, who retired with little loss to the City, while the Goths fled in disorder.

547. Discontent of the Goths with Totila.

It was too clear that Rome was indeed lost. The fateful City was again held by the invincible General, and all the past labours of the barbarians were in vain. Bitterly did the Gothic chiefs now reproach their King for not having either rased the City to the ground or occupied it in force. A few weeks before they had all been chanting the praises of 'the wise, the unconquered King, who took city after city from the Romans, and then marring their defences, sprang forth again like a hero to fight in the open field[1].' Such however, as the historian sadly remarks, is the inconsistency of human nature, and it is not likely that men will ever act more nobly[2].

Totila retires to Tibur (*Tivoli*).

Slowly and reluctantly did Totila leave his rival in undisputed possession of the great prize. He retreated to Tivoli, breaking down all the bridges over the Tiber[3] to prevent Belisarius from following him. The city and citadel of Tibur which the Goths had before destroyed were now rebuilt by them, and received their arms and their treasure. If Rome could not be retaken, at least Belisarius might be kept in check from this well-placed watch-tower. Possibly while the bulk of the Gothic army took up its quarters on the hill, in sight of the Sibyl's Temple and within hearing of the roar of Anio, their King may have lodged in the vast enclosure in the plain below, a city rather than a palace, which goes by the unpretending name of 'the Villa of Hadrian.'

[1] I have expanded the words of Procopius, but I think he means us to understand that such was the burden of the Gothic songs.

[2] Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐχ οἷόν τέ ἐστι μὴ οὐχὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐς ἀεὶ ἁμαρτάνεσθαι, ἐπεὶ καὶ φύσει γίγνεσθαι εἴωθε.

[3] Except the Ponte Molle, which was too near to the City for him to destroy it.

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547. The keys of Rome sent to Justinian.

Meanwhile Belisarius, free from molestation, caused gates to be prepared and fitted into the empty archways round Rome. They were bound with iron and fitted with massive locks, the keys of which were sent to Constantinople. Amid all his anxieties Justinian could once more feel himself Emperor of Rome. And so ended the twelfth year of the war and the third year of the second command of Belisarius.

May, 547.

The possession of Rome of less importance than it seemed.

There are times when the Muse of History seems to relax a little from the majestic calm with which she tells the story of the centuries. A smile appears to flicker round her statuesque lips as she tells of Cleon forced to go forth to war against Sphacteria, and returning, contrary to the expectation of all men, with his three hundred Spartan prisoners; of the Genoese besieging Venice, and themselves sealed up in Chioggia; of the leaders of the Fourth Crusade setting out to fight with the infidels and destroying the Christian Empire of Constantinople. With even such a quiver of amusement in her voice does she describe Belisarius slipping, like a hermit-crab, into the shattered shell of Empire which was called Rome, and making it in so few days into a fortress which he could hold against all the onsets of the angry Totila. It seems doubtful, however, whether the exploit was worth all the trouble and risk which attended it. The importance now attached to the possession of Rome was chiefly a matter of sentiment: its re-occupation had little practical effect on the fortunes of the war.

Limits of Gothic and Roman occupation.

It may be fairly inferred, from the not very precise information given us by Procopius, that at this time the north and centre of Italy were almost entirely in

the possession of the Goths. The only exceptions appear to have been Ravenna and Ancona on the northern Hadriatic, Perugia in Tuscany, Spoleto in Umbria, and Rome with her neighbour Portus. Samnium, Campania, and Northern Apulia were for the most part strongly held by the Goths. Calabria was so far dominated by the ports of Otranto and Taranto that it might be considered as a possession of the Emperor's. In Lucania, the hostile family of Venantius were perpetually endeavouring to rekindle the flames of loyalty to the Empire. Bruttii probably, and Sicily certainly, obeyed the generals of the Emperor.

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Justinian starves the war.

One reason for the languid and desultory character of the war was the determination of the Emperor to spend no more money upon it than he could possibly help. From the slender remains of loyal Italy, Belisarius had to squeeze out the funds necessary for the support of his own army and that of John, not neglecting, it is to be feared, to add to his own stores in doing so[1]. Another cause was the evident want of hearty co-operation between the two generals, due to the fact that one belonged to the party of Germanus and the other to that of Theodora, at the court of the Emperor. This discord between John and Belisarius was referred to with satisfaction by Totila in a long harangue which he delivered to his

Discord in the Imperial army.

[1] Procopius in the Anecdota (cap. 5) says: 'Never did Belisarius show himself so keen after ignoble gain as at this time, having received no supply of money from the Emperor, but spoiling without mercy the inhabitants of Ravenna and Sicily and any other places which might be in the obedience of the Emperor, forcing them to render accounts to him for all their past lives' [that is, no doubt, for taxes and public moneys which had passed through their hands].

BOOK V. CH. 20. soldiers before marching off to form the siege of Perugia. In it he frankly admitted that he knew

547. Totila's Apologia. that they looked upon him with dissatisfaction for not having hindered the re-occupation of Rome; confessed, in substance if not in express words, that this was a blunder; but pleaded that he had not shown himself deaf to the teachings of experience, and urged that the step taken by Belisarius was one of such extreme rashness, that, though it had been justified by success, he could not, by the laws of war, have been expected to anticipate it[1].

John makes a dash into Campania. Not long after this harangue the Gothic King lost his other great prize of war, the Senator-hostages in Campania. John, who had for some time been vainly besieging Acherontia, made a sudden dash into that province, marching night and day without stopping. He had reached Capua, and might have effected his purpose without bloodshed, had not Totila, with a kind of instinctive apprehension of some such design, also sent a detachment of cavalry into Campania. The Gothic horsemen, who had been marching rapidly, reached Minturnae (close to the old frontier of Latium and Campania and about forty miles from Capua), but were in no fit state for marching further that day. The least fatigued of the horsemen—about four hundred in number—were mounted on the freshest of the horses and pushed forward to Capua, where they stumbled unawares upon the whole of John's army.

Skirmish at Capua. In the skirmish that ensued this little band was naturally worsted. The survivors, few in number, galloped back to Minturnae, scarcely able to describe

[1] This speech seems to me to have more of Procopius and less of Totila in it than most of its kind.

what had befallen them, but the streaming blood, the arrows yet fixed in the wounds, told the tale of defeat plainly enough. Hereupon the whole body of cavalry retreated in all haste from Minturnae, and when they reached Totila, gave him an exaggerated account of the number of the enemy, in order to excuse their own precipitancy.

The Senators recovered.

John meanwhile proceeded, unhindered, to liberate the Senators and their wives from captivity. Of the senatorial ladies and their children he found the tale complete: for many of the fathers and husbands had escaped to Belisarius at Portus, and consequently needed no deliverance. There was one Roman noble, Clementinus by name, who fled to a church in Capua for refuge from the unwelcome rescuers. He feared the vengeance of the Emperor for his too ready surrender to the Goths of a fort in the neighbourhood of Naples, and absolutely refused to accompany the army of John. Another Roman, Orestes by name, who had filled the office of Consul, and whom we heard of at the capture of Rome as a refugee at the altar of St. Peter's, longed to accompany the army of deliverance, but could not, being unable to find a horse to bear him to their camp. All the rescued prisoners were straightway sent to the safe harbourage of Sicily, together with seventy Roman soldiers, formerly deserters to the army of Totila, who had now returned to their old allegiance.

Totila's march along the Apennines.

Great was the vexation of Totila when he learned that he had lost these valuable hostages. Determining at least to be revenged, and knowing that John, who had retreated into Lucania, would carefully watch all the roads leading to his camp, he marched rapidly

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547. had ten thousand men with him, John but one thousand. If he could but have restrained his impatience till daybreak, he might have enclosed his enemy as in a net: but in his rage and haste he gave the signal for attack at once, and thereby lost much of the advantage of his superiority in numbers. About a hundred of the Romans were slain, some of them still only half-awake, but the rest escaped. Among the latter were John and the Herulian chief Arufus, who seems to have been his right hand in this enterprise. Among the few prisoners was an Armenian general, Gilacius by name, who, though in the service of the Emperor, knew no tongue but his native Armenian. The Gothic soldiers, fearful in the confusion of the night of killing one of their own friends, asked him who he was, to which he could make no reply but *Gilacius Strategos* (Gilacius the General), over and over again repeated. By often hearing the honourable title *Strategos*, he had just succeeded in learning the name of his own dignity. The Goths, who soon perceived that he was no officer of theirs, took him prisoner; and we regret to find that, not many days after, the unfortunate Oriental, 'who knew neither the Greek nor the Latin nor the Gothic language,' was put to death by his Teutonic captors. John with the remains of his army succeeded in reaching Otranto, and again shut himself up in that stronghold.

John's camp surprised.

John retreats to Otranto.

For two years after this skirmish no event of great importance occurred, but, as far as we can judge from the not very lucid narrative of Procopius, the Imperial cause slowly receded. Justinian sent indeed fresh

Two years of desultory fighting. 547 to 549.

troops to Italy, but only in driblets[1], and commanded by incapable generals. Incapable through want of self-restraint was the fierce Herulian Verus, who was constantly in a state of intoxication. He landed at Otranto, marched with his three hundred followers to Brindisi, and encamped near to that town. Seeing his force thus encamped in an undefended position, Totila exclaimed, 'One of two things must be true. Either Verus has a large army, or he is a very unwise man. Let us go, either to make trial of his strength or to punish him for his folly.' He advanced, easily routed the little band commanded by the drunken Herulian, and would have driven them into the sea but for the sudden and accidental appearance of Byzantine ships in the offing, bearing Warazes and eight hundred Armenians.

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547. Weak reinforcements from Constantinople.

Verus the drunkard.

Incapable, from utter lack of courage and every soldierly quality, was Valerian, who had held the high post of *Magister Militum* in Armenia, but was transferred to Italy with more than one thousand men to co-operate with John and Belisarius. He lingered for months at Salona, afraid of the storms of the Hadriatic. Then, when a council of war was held at Otranto, and a march northwards into Picenum was resolved upon, he would not face the perils and hardships of the march, but took ship again and sailed tranquilly to Imperialist Ancona, where he shut himself up and

Valerian the coward.

Dec. 547–May, 548.

[1] Somewhat more than 2000 men were sent in the autumn of 547, viz. a few men under Pacurius son of Peranius, and Sergius nephew of Solomon; 300 Heruli under Verus; 800 men under Warazes the Armenian; more than 1000 under Valerian, *Magister Militum* of Armenia. Again (in the summer of 548), 2000 infantry were sent to Sicily, apparently to form a reserve for the Italian army.

BOOK V. CH. 20. hoped for better days. Evidently he was one of those generals whose chief care is to keep their own persons out of the stress of battle.

Defence of Roscianum. The only interest of these two campaigns lies in the defence of Roscianum (now Rossano). The story of this place takes us back—it is true, by a circuitous route—to the very dawn of Hellenic history. At the westernmost angle of that deep hollow in the foot of Italy which is named the Gulf of Tarentum stood, in the eighth century before the Christian era, the mighty Achaian city of Sybaris. (Story of Sybaris.) The wealth derived from the splendid fertility of her soil (though now her ruins lie hidden in a fever-haunted morass), as well as from a profitable commerce with the shepherds on the Apennines behind their city, enabled the aristocrats of Sybaris early to acquire that reputation for unbounded luxury which has made their name proverbial. It was Smindyrides, a citizen of Sybaris, who was the first utterer of the complaint concerning the crumpled rose-leaf in his bed, and who declared that the sight of a peasant working in the fields overwhelmed him with fatigue. The neighbour and rival of Sybaris was the city, also populous and powerful, of Crotona, which stood at the south-east angle of the Gulf of Tarentum. Thither, in the sixth century before Christ, fled the languid aristocrats of Sybaris, expelled by a popular rising, and by a tyrant the child of revolution. That tyrant, Telys, insolently demanded the surrender of his enemies, but the demand was refused by the citizens of Crotona, trembling indeed before the power of Sybaris, but nerved to great deeds in the cause of hospitality by the exhortations of their guide and philosopher, Pythagoras. (B.C. 510.) In the battle which ensued,

the multitudinous host of the Sybarites was defeated by the army of the southern city, commanded by the mighty Milo of Crotona, famous for ever as an athlete, and yet also a disciple of Pythagoras. The Crotoniates advanced, sacked the rival city, and, so it is said, turned the river Crathis over its ruins, that none might know where Sybaris had stood.

All this happened in the year 510 B.C., the same year in which, according to tradition, the Tarquins were driven from Rome.

Story of Thurii.

Nearly seventy years later (B.C. 443) the Athenians, on the earnest entreaty of the descendants of the Sybarites, sent a colony to the desolate spot; and in the near neighbourhood of the obliterated city rose the new settlement of Thurii, best known in history from the fact that Herodotus was one of its original colonists and spent his old age within its walls. But either because the mouth of the river Crathis had become unnavigable, or for some other reason, it had been found necessary to establish the docks and harbour of Thurii close to the promontory of Roscia, twelve miles south of the old city. In the hills, some seven or eight miles west of these docks, the Romans built a strong fortress which bore the name of Roscianum, and is represented by the modern city of Rossano, with an archbishop and twelve thousand inhabitants[1].

Building of Roscianum.

[1] Following the writer in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography, I speak with some uncertainty as to these topographical details. The sites of Sybaris and Thurii are both doubtful, and the language of Procopius (p. 396) is not very clear. The statement in the Itinerary of Antonine, 'A Turiis ad Roscianum M. P. xii,' is the most precise piece of information that we have.

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548. Refugees at Roscianum.

In Roscianum was now collected a considerable number of wealthy and noble Italians, refugees from that part of Italy which was occupied by the barbarians. Conspicuous among them was Deopheron, son of Venantius and brother of Tullianus, a member of a family animated by bitter hostility to the Gothic rule. John had sent from his army for the defence of Roscianum three hundred Illyrians, under the command of Chalazar the Hun, an excellent soldier, who seems to have been recognised as head over the whole garrison. Belisarius had only been able to spare one hundred foot-soldiers for the same service.

Skirmish and defeat of the Goths.

Early in 548 Belisarius, who with his martial wife had sailed round to Crotona, sent a further detachment of soldiers to relieve Roscianum. They met, apparently by accident, a smaller force sent by Totila to attack it. In the skirmish which followed the Goths were completely defeated and fled, leaving two hundred of their number dead upon the plain. While the victors were lapped in all the security of success, leaving the passes unguarded, pitching their tents wide at night, and wandering afar for forage by day, suddenly Totila, with three thousand men, burst upon them from the mountains. Vain was the might of Phazas, the brave Iberian from Caucasus, upon whose quarters the blow first descended, to turn the tide of battle. He fell fighting bravely in the midst of a band of heroes. Much fear came upon the Romans when they knew him to be dead, for they had expected great exploits from him in the future. Barbatian, one of the bodyguard of Belisarius, who had shared the command with Phazas, fled with two of his comrades from the field, and brought the grievous news to his master.

Victory of Totila.

548. Flight of Belisarius.

Belisarius, who seems to have been alarmed for the safety of Crotona itself, leaped on shipboard—probably Antonina accompanied him—and sailed for Messina, which, so fair was the wind, he reached in one day, though distant ninety miles from Crotona.

Ineffectual attempt to relieve Roscianum by sea.

Hard pressed by Totila after this ineffectual attempt to relieve them, the garrison at length agreed to surrender Roscianum if no help should reach them by the middle of summer (548). The appointed day had just dawned, when they saw on the horizon the friendly sails of the Byzantine ships. Belisarius, John, and Valerian had met in council at Otranto, and had decided to send a fleet to the help of the beleaguered city. The hopes of the garrison being raised by this sight, they refused to fulfil their compact. A storm, however, arose, which the captain dared not face on that rock-bound coast, and the ships returned to Crotona. Many weeks passed, and again the Byzantine ships appeared in the offing. The barbarians leaped upon their horses and moved briskly along the shore, determined to dispute the landing. Totila placed his spearmen here, his bowmen there, and left not a spot unoccupied where the enemy could land. At that sight the Romans' eagerness for the fight vanished. They let down their anchors; they hovered about, beholding the docks and Roscianum afar off: at length they weighed anchor and sailed back to Crotona.

Surrender of Roscianum.

Another council of war was held. The generals resolved to try to effect a diversion. Belisarius was to revictual Rome, the others were to march into Picenum and attack the besieging armies there. It was upon this occasion that Valerian distinguished himself by not marching, but sailing to the friendly

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shelter of Ancona. But all these operations were in vain. Totila refused to be diverted from the siege of Roscianum; and the unfortunate garrison, who had only been tantalised by all the attempts to succour them, sent Deopheron and a Thracian life-guardsman of Belisarius named Gudilas to cry for Totila's mercy on their unfaithfulness. To Chalazar the Hun, whom he looked upon as the chief deceiver, the King showed himself unpitying. He cut off both his hands and inflicted on him other shameful mutilations before he deprived him of life. The rest of the garrison were admitted to the benefit of the old capitulation. The lives of all, and the property of as many as chose to accept service under the Gothic standard, were left uninjured. The result was that all the late defenders of Roscianum, but eighty, gladly enlisted with the barbarians. The eighty loyal soldiers made their way in honourable poverty to Crotona. Not one of the Italian nobles lost his life, but the property of all was taken from them.

Humiliating position of Belisarius, June, 548.

Belisarius had now been for more than four years in Italy, and, chiefly on account of the miserable manner in which his efforts had been seconded by his master, he had but a poor account to render of his exploits during that time. 'He had never really grasped the land of Italy during this second command,' says Procopius, who cannot forgive the triumph of Antonina, and who seems to delight in trampling on the fragments of his broken idol. 'He never made a single regular march by land, but skulked about from fortress to fortress, stealing from one point of the coast to another like a fugitive; and thus he really gave the enemy boldness to capture Rome, and one might

almost say the whole country[1].' His one really brilliant exploit, the re-occupation of Rome, had not, as we have seen, materially affected the fortunes of the war. It was time certainly that he should either be enabled to achieve something greater, or else quit Italy altogether. Antonina accordingly set out for Constantinople to obtain from her patroness an assurance of more effectual succour than the Imperial cause in Italy had yet received. When she arrived she found that an event had occurred which changed the whole aspect of affairs at the court of Justinian. On the 1st of July, 548, Theodora, the beautiful and the remorseless, died, after a little more than twenty-one years of empire. When we read that the cause of her death was cancer[2], of an exceptionally virulent type, even our remembrance of the misdeeds of Theodora is well-nigh swallowed up in pity for her fate.

Mission of Antonina to Constantinople.

Death of Theodora, 1 July, 548.

Antonina, on arriving at Constantinople and hearing of the death of her Imperial friend, at once decided on the necessary changes in her tactics. For the last six or seven years tedious negotiations had been carried on between the two ladies for the marriage of a grandson of Theodora with Joannina, only child of Belisarius, and heiress of all his vast wealth. Long had Antonina, while seeming to consent to this match, secretly opposed it. And now, though her daughter's heart was entirely given to her young betrothed, perhaps even her honour surrendered to him, the cold schemer relentlessly broke off the engagement. We hear nothing

Antonina breaks off the engagement between her daughter and the grandson of Theodora.

[1] De Bello Gotth. iii. 35 (p. 427).

[2] 'Theodora Augusta Chalcedonensis Synodi inimica cancri plaga corpore toto perfusa vitam prodigiose finivit' (Vict. Tunnun. ap. Roncalli, ii. 372).

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more of the fate of either of the lovers; but it seems probable that the daughter of Belisarius died before her father[1].

Antonina obtains the recall of Belisarius.

As for the Italian expedition, Antonina recognised the impossibility of now obtaining from the parsimonious Emperor the supplies of men and money without which success was impossible. Germanus, noblest and most virtuous of all the Emperor's nephews, would be now indisputably the second person in the state, and if any laurels were to be gathered in Italy they would without doubt be destined for him. She confined herself therefore to petitioning the Emperor for the lesser boon of the recall of her husband, and this favour was granted to her. Early in the year 549 Belisarius returned to Constantinople, with wealth much increased but glory somewhat tarnished by the events of those five years of his second command. Justinian, upon whom the hand of Chosroës was at that time pressing heavily, had some thought of employing him again in the Persian War, but though he was named Master of the Soldiery 'per Orientem,' we find no evidence of his having again taken the field for that enterprise. He also held the rank of general of the household troops[2], and he took precedence of all other Consuls and Patricians, even those who had held these dignities for a longer period than himself.

Latter days of Belisarius.

To end our notice of the career of the great General it will be necessary to travel a little beyond the period properly covered by this volume.

[1] This may be inferred from the fact that the fortune of Belisarius after his death went into the Imperial Treasury.

[2] Τῶν βασιλικῶν σωματοφυλάκων ἄρχων (De Bell. Gotth. iv. 21). Probably this is equivalent to 'Magister Militum in Praesenti.'

559. Hunnish invasion of Thrace, 559.

In the year 559 great alarm was created in the provinces of Moesia and Thrace by the tidings that the Kotrigur Huns had crossed the frozen Danube. What relation the tribe who were called by this uncouth name may have borne to the countrymen of Attila it might be difficult to say. They seem to have acknowledged a closer kinship with the Utigur Huns who dwelt alongside of them north of the Danube than with any other race of barbarians; but the attitude of the two clans to one another was not friendly, and the favour shown by the authorities at Constantinople to the Romanising Utigurs was one of the pretexts upon which the more savage Kotrigurs took up arms against the Empire.

Under the command of their King Zabergan the horde of savage horsemen swept across the ill-defended plains of Moesia and through the Balkan passes into Thrace. Thence, like Alaric of old, Zabergan sent one division of his army southwards to the cities of Greece, the inhabitants of which were dwelling in fancied security. Another division ravaged the Chersonese, and hoped to effect a passage into Asia. The third division dared to move towards the Imperial City itself. To their own astonishment doubtless they found their progress practically unopposed. The wall of Anastasius, the breakwater which has so often turned back the tide of barbaric invasion, was not at this time in a state capable of defence. Earthquakes had levelled parts of it with the ground, and the Emperor, who had despatched conquering expeditions to Carthage and Rome, and imposed his theological definitions on a General Council, wanted either the leisure or the money needful for the obvious duty of

BOOK V. CH. 20. 559. repairing this line of fortifications. Over the crumbling heaps pressed King Zabergan and his seven thousand horsemen. Wherever they went they spread terror and desolation. Two captives of illustrious rank fell into their hands,—Sergius, the *Magister Militum per Thracias*, and Ederman, son of that Grand Chamberlain Calopodius whose name twenty-seven years before had been uttered with shouts of execration by the Green party in the Hippodrome at Constantinople [1]. On the ordinary inhabitants of this district—the Home Counties as we should say of the Byzantine Empire—the hand of these savage spoilers fell very heavily. A vast crowd of captives were dragged about with them in their wanderings. Nuns torn from the convent had to undergo the last extremity of outrage from their brutal conquerors. Pregnant women, when the hour of their distress came upon them, had to bring forth their little ones on the highway, untended, unpitied, and unsheltered from the gaze of the barbarians. The children born in these terrible days were left naked on the road as the squalid host moved on to some fresh scene of devastation, and were a prey to dogs and vultures.

The Huns penetrate within seventeen miles of Constantinople.

Amid such scenes of terror the savage Kotrigurs reached the little village of Melantias on the river Athyras, eighteen miles from Constantinople, a point on the road to Hadrianople about seven miles further from the capital than the celebrated suburb of San Stefano, to which in our own time the invaders from across the Danube penetrated [2]. There was universal

[1] See vol. iii. p. 557. We get these names from Theophanes. I have added 'per Thracias' to the title of Sergius, conjecturally. It occurs in the Notitia.

[2] Both San Stefano and Melantias (now Buyûk Tchekmadgé)

terror and dismay in the sovereign city, and men eagerly asked one another what force there was to resist the invader. The mighty armies of the Empire, which in her prosperous days had amounted to six hundred and forty-five thousand men, had dwindled in the time of Justinian to one hundred and fifty thousand[1]. And of this diminished force some were in Italy, some in Spain; some were watching the defiles of the Caucasus, and some were keeping down the Monophysites in Alexandria. The number of real fighting men available for the defence of the capital was so small as to be absolutely contemptible. There was, however, a body of men, the so-called *Scholarii*[2], the Household Troops of the Empire, who, like the life-guards of a modern sovereign, should have been available for the defence not only of the palace, but of the capital also. But eighty years of indiscipline had ruined the efficiency of a body of troops which under Theodosius and his sons had contained many men, of barbarian origin indeed, but the bravest soldiers in the army. Zeno, we are told, had commenced the down-

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559.

The Scholarii.

are described in Walsh's Journey from Constantinople (1828). The modern name of Melantias signifies 'Great Bridge,' and is derived from the extraordinary length of the bridge over the Athyras, which consists of twenty-six arches.

[1] As this is an important passage for the statistician, I will quote it in the very words of Agathias: Τὰ γὰρ τῶν Ῥωμαίων στρατεύματα, οὐ τοσαῦτα διαμεμενηκότα ὁπόσα τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ τῶν πάλαι βασιλέων ἐξεύρηται, ἐς ἐλαχίστην δέ τινα μοῖραν περιελθόντα, οὐκέτι τῷ μεγέθει τῆς πολιτείας ἐξήρκουν. Δέον γὰρ ἐς πέντε καὶ τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἑξακοσίας χιλιάδας μαχίμων ἀνδρῶν τὴν ὅλην ἀγείρεσθαι δύναμιν, μόλις ἐν τῷ τότε εἰς πεντήκοντα καὶ ἑκατὸν [χιλιάδας] περιειστήκει (Hist. v. 13; pp. 305–6, ed. Bonn).

[2] Perhaps the Vexillationes Palatinae and Legiones Palatinae of the Notitia Orientis (cap. v).

559. ward course by filling the ranks of the *Scholarii* entirely with his own pampered Isaurian countrymen. Since then the process of decay had continued. To wear the gorgeous costume of a *scholarius*, to have access to the palace, and to be employed about the person of the Emperor had seemed so desirable to the rich citizens of Constantinople that they had offered large sums to have their names entered on the muster-rolls. The Emperors, especially Justinian, hard pressed for money, had gladly caught at this means of replenishing their coffers: and thus it came to pass that at this crisis of the nation's need a number of splendidly-dressed luxurious citizen-soldiers, entirely unused to the hardships and the exercises of war, were, with one exception, all that could be relied upon to beat back the wild hordes of Zabergan.

Alarm of Justinian.

That exception was a little body of veterans, not more than three hundred in number, who had served under Belisarius in Italy. To them and to their glorious commander all eyes were now turned. The Emperor, now probably in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and no longer sustained by the proud spirit of the indomitable Theodora, was seized, apparently, with such fear as had prostrated him during the insurrection of the NIKA. He gave orders that all the vessels of gold and silver should be stripped from the churches in the suburbs and carried within the City. He bade the Scholarii, and even the Senators themselves[1], assemble behind the gates of the wall

[1] We get this fact from Theophanes: Καὶ περιεφύλαττον τὰς πόρτας πάσας τοῦ τείχους τοῦ Θεοδοσιακοῦ αἱ Σχολαί, καὶ οἱ Προτέκτορες, καὶ οἱ Ἀριθμοὶ καὶ πᾶσα ἡ Σύγκλητος. The Ἀριθμοὶ (Numeri) represent the rank and file of the ordinary troops. I cannot state

with which Theodosius II had encompassed Constantinople. And, last mark of the extremity of his fear, he consented to invest Belisarius with the supreme command, notwithstanding the unslumbering jealousy with which he regarded the greatest of his servants. BOOK V. CH. 20. 559.

Belisarius called to take the chief command.

Belisarius, who seems, notwithstanding his illustrious offices, to have been virtually living in retirement since his return from Italy, accepted the charge laid upon him and donned the breastplate and helmet which had been for ten years unworn. Though still only in middle life (for, if our computation of his birth-year be correct, he was but fifty-four, and he cannot possibly have been more than two or three years older[1]), he seemed to those around him already outworn with age[2]. The terrible anxieties of even his most triumphant campaigns, the strain of the long siege of Rome, the fever at Portus, above all the exquisite misery of the quarrel with Antonina, had aged him before his time.

His plan of campaign.

But with the familiar sensation of the helmet and the breastplate worn once more came back much of the martial energy of former days. Leaving perhaps the dainty *Scholarii* to man the walls of Constantinople, he went forth with his three hundred veterans, with all the horses that he could collect from the Circus and from the Imperial stables, and with a crowd of rustics eager to taste what they supposed to be the pleasures of war under the command of the unconquered

the exact relation between Scholae and Protectores, who must both have been of the Household troops.

[1] Since he was ὑπηνήτης, a beardless stripling, in 526, thirty-three years before the Hunnish invasion.

[2] Κεκμηκὼς ἤδη ὑπὸ τοῦ γήρως.

559. Belisarius. The General accepted their service, determining to avail himself of their numbers to strike terror into the enemy, but to give them no chance of actually mingling in the fray. He pitched his camp at the village of Chettus[1], bade the peasants draw a deep ditch round it, and, as of old at the relief of Rimini, kindled his watch-fires on as broad a line as possible, that the barbarians might form an exaggerated idea of his numbers. Seeing that his veterans were indulging in too contemptuous an estimate of their enemy, and already counting the victory as won, he addressed them in a military harangue, in which he explained that while he fully shared their conviction that victory was possible, it was so only on the condition of strict obedience to his orders. Nothing but Roman discipline strictly observed could enable their little band to triumph over the savage hosts of Zabergan[2].

Still intent on deceiving the enemy as much as possible, he ordered his rustic followers to cut down trees and trail them about in the rear of every column of his troops, so raising a cloud of dust which masked their movements, and gave them the appearance of a mighty multitude. Then, when two thousand of Zabergan's horsemen advanced towards him, by a skilfuld isposition of his archers in an adjoining wood, he so galled the enemy with a well-directed shower of arrows on both flanks, that he compelled them to

[1] I do not find any identification of this site, but it was probably about half-way to Melantias.

[2] It is interesting to compare this oration, feeble and diffuse as it is, with the speeches reported by Procopius. The style is very inferior, but the thoughts are substantially the same that we meet with in many of those speeches.

narrow their front and charge him at that part of his line where he knew that his hardy veterans would repel them. And during the whole time of the engagement the rustics and the citizens of Constantinople were ordered, not to fight, but to keep up such a shouting and such a clash of arms against one another as might convey to the minds of the barbarians the idea that a desperate encounter was going on somewhere near them.

Victory over the Huns.

These tactics, quaint and almost childish as they seem to us, proved successful. The advancing Huns were vigorously repulsed by the handful of Italian veterans; they were dismayed by the shouting and the clash of arms; they turned to fly, and in flight forgot their Parthian-like accomplishment of discharging arrows at a pursuing foe. Belisarius did not dare to follow them far lest he should reveal the weakness of his little band; but four hundred slaughtered Huns, and the hot haste in which Zabergan returned to his camp, sufficiently showed that victory rested with the Imperial troops. Constantinople at any rate was saved. The Huns marched back to the other side of the wall of Anastasius, and renounced the hope of penetrating to the capital.

Recall of Belisarius.

The victory might have been made a decisive one had Belisarius been continued in the command, but as soon as Constantinople was delivered from its pressing danger, that jealousy of the great General, which had become a second nature with the aged Emperor, resumed its sway. Belisarius was curtly and ungraciously ordered to return to the City, and the Kotrigurs, as soon as they heard that he was no longer with the army, ceased to retreat. The rest of the Hunnish

BOOK V. CH. 20. 559. campaign need not here be described. It was ended by the payment of a large sum of money by Justinian, nominally as ransom for Sergius and the other captives, but really as a bribe to induce the Kotrigurs to return to their old haunts by the Danube. Their hostile kinsmen the Utigurs fell upon them in their homeward march, and inflicted upon them such grievous slaughter that they never after ventured on an invasion of the Empire. Both of these offshoots of the great Hunnish stock were in fact soon uprooted and destroyed by the irruption of the terrible Avars.

His return to Constantinople.

Belisarius on his return to Constantinople was hailed with shouts of joy by the common people, who beheld in him their deliverer from all the horrors of barbarian capture. For a little time his appearance in the streets and in the Forum was as veritable a triumph as when he returned from the siege of Ravenna. Soon, however, the jealous temper of the sovereign, the calumnies of the courtiers, the envy of the nobles, who seem never to have been reconciled to his rapid elevation, prevailed over the enthusiasm of the populace, and Belisarius became again, as he had been for ten years previously, a man who, though possessed of wealth, of renown, and of nominal rank, was devoid of any real influence in State affairs.

Belisarius accused of conspiring against Justinian, 562.

Three years after his victory over Zabergan, Belisarius was accused of connivance at a conspiracy against the life of Justinian[1]. The conspiracy, which was set

[1] We get all our information as to this conspiracy from Theophanes (pp. 201–2, ed. Paris, 1655). It must be remembered that he begins his years with the commencement of the Indiction (1st Sep.), and consequently the disgrace of Belisarius in December and his restoration to favour in the following July are included in the same year.

on foot by one Sergius (a person of obscure rank[1], and not to be confounded with the Magister Militum who had been taken captive by the Huns), was apparently an affair of no political importance, a mere villainous scheme to murder a venerable old man during his siesta: and being revealed by a loquacious confederate to an officer of the Imperial household, was suppressed without difficulty. In their fall, however, the detected murderers endeavoured to drag down the great General. They declared that Belisarius himself had been aware of the existence of the conspiracy, and that his steward[2], Paulus by name, had taken an active part in their deliberations[3]. The accused men being arrested, and probably put to the torture, confessed that Belisarius was privy to the plot. On the fifth of December the Emperor convoked a meeting of the Senate, to which he proceeded in state, accompanied by the Patriarch Eutychius. He ordered the confessions to be read in the presence of the assembly. Belisarius, on hearing himself accused, showed not so much of indignation as of misery and self-abasement[4]. Justinian, though his anger was hot against the accused General, suffered him to live, but took away his guards and his large retinue of servants, and ordered him to remain in his house under surveillance. This state of things lasted

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562.

25 Nov.

5 Dec. 562.

Belisarius disgraced.

[1] He was grandson of the Curator Aetherius. The Curator was probably not higher in rank than *Clarissimus*.

[2] Curator.

[3] For some reason which is not explained the plot seems to have been chiefly concocted by silversmiths. Marcellus, Isaac, and Vitus, all conspirators, or accused of being so, were also all Ἀργυροπράται.

[4] So I think we must understand the words of Theophanes: Καὶ ἀκούσας Βελλισάριος μεγάλως ἐβαρήθη.

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563.

19 July, 563, restored to favour.

for seven months. On the nineteenth of July in the following year the veteran General was restored to all his former honours and emoluments, and received again into the favour of Justinian, who had probably satisfied himself that the accusation which he had previously believed was a mere calumny invented by ruined and desperate men.

Death of Belisarius, Mar. 565.

Nearly two years after this, Belisarius died, preceding his jealous master to the grave by about eight months. His wife Antonina, according to one late and doubtful authority, also survived him, but retired after his death into religious seclusion[1]. His property, that vast wealth for the sake of which he had endured so much humiliation and allowed so many stains to rest on his glory, was appropriated, perhaps after the death of his widow, to the necessities of the Imperial Treasury[2].

[1] If Antonina was living at this time she must have been, according to Procopius's statement, eighty-two years old (since he makes her sixty in 543). The only authority for her survivorship of Belisarius is the Anonymous author of Antiquitates Constantinopolitanae (in Banduri's Imperium Orientale, part i. p. 37, ed. Paris), who, in describing the Church of St. Procopius, says that it occupied the site of the Palace of Vigilantia erected by Justinian, and that 'Antonina, the wife of Belisarius the Magister, who was Mistress of the Robes (ζωστὴ) to Theodora the wife of Justinian, after her widowhood fixed her residence here with Vigilantia, and by her persuasion the Church of St. Procopius was erected.' But this might *possibly* mean after Antonina's first widowhood. By Vigilantia is probably meant the sister of Justinian and mother of the Emperor Justin II.

[2] 'And the property of this man went into the Imperial palace of Marina' (Theophanes, p. 203). Ducange (Const. Christiana, Lib. ii. vii) says that this place was built by Marina, daughter of Arcadius, and concludes from this passage that it was at the time of Justinian converted into a receptacle for the treasures of the Emperor [perhaps, rather, turned into an office where the business of the Treasury was transacted].

Legend of his blindness and beggary.

Such, as far as we can now ascertain it, is apparently the true story of the disgrace of Belisarius and his final restoration to the favour of Justinian. But another story, that which represents him as blinded and reduced to beggary, and sitting as a mendicant at the gates of Constantinople, or even of Rome[1], has obtained very wide currency, partly through the genius of Marmontel, who naturally laid hold of so striking a reverse of fortune to give point to the romance of *Belisaire.* The authority for this story, as will be seen in the following note, is of the poorest kind, and dates only from the eleventh or twelfth century. It is a very probable suggestion that in the five or six hundred years which intervened between the hero's death and the first appearance of this story in literature, popular tradition had confounded his reverses with those of his contemporary John of Cappadocia, who was really reduced to beggary, but not to blindness. Yet the idea of so terrible a fall from so splendid a position has fastened itself too deeply in the popular mind to be ever really eradicated, let it be disproved as often as it may. In the future, as in the past, for one reader who knows of the capture of Gelimer or the marvellous defence of Rome, there will be ten who associate the great General's name with the thought of a blind beggar holding a wooden box before him, and crying in pathetic tones '*Date obolum Belisario.*'

[1] I have seen a statement, the author of which I cannot remember, that the Pincian Gate of Rome was named the Belisarian because there Belisarius sat and begged.

NOTE D. On the alleged Blindness and Beggary of Belisarius.

NOTE D.

For a full discussion of this often-debated question I must refer my readers to Lord Mahon's Life of Belisarius (pp. 441–473) and Finlay's History of Greece (vol. i. pp. 429–431, ed. 1877). It will be sufficient here to indicate the chief points in this controversy, which is a somewhat peculiar one, inasmuch as we have—

A. No first-rate contemporary evidence.

B. One second-rate authority against the popular story; and,

C. Two third- or fourth-rate authorities for it.

A. Of contemporary notices of the last years of Belisarius there is a disappointing deficiency. Procopius, of whose own death-year we are ignorant (all that we know for certain being that he lived after 559), seems to have written his two latest works, the *De Aedificiis* and the *Anecdota*, in 558 or 559 (see Dahn's Procopius von Caesarea, pp. 38–39), and therefore of course makes no mention of the events of 563.

Agathias lived to a considerably later period, and died (if Niebuhr's view be correct) about 582. His history, however, closes with the war between the two tribes of Huns in 559, and consequently he has no opportunity of telling us directly what happened to Belisarius three years later. Some readers may think that if so terrible a reverse of fortune as the popular story indicates had happened to the hero whose deeds he commemorates, some indirect allusion would have been made to it by Agathias: but that is only an argument *e silentio*, and not a very powerful one of its kind.

The chroniclers who have in their dry way given us so much useful information as to the events of the fifth and sixth centuries, now begin to fail us. Marcellinus Comes gives us no facts after 558. Victor Tunnunensis brings his work down to 565, but is so absorbed in the controversy about the Three Chapters that he can hardly speak of anything else.

The Chronicon Paschale is almost a complete blank for the last thirteen years of the reign of Justinian. Malalas, who tells the story of the disgrace of Belisarius in nearly the same words as Theophanes, stops short at January, 563, and therefore could say nothing about the restoration of Belisarius to favour. But the very measured terms in which he speaks of the General's disgrace ('and the same Belisarius remained under the Imperial displeasure[1]') must be taken, upon the whole, as showing that he had not heard or did not believe the story of the blindness and the beggary.

B. In default of all contemporary and nearly contemporary evidence we consult the Chronographia of Theophanes, from whom is derived the account of the last years of Belisarius which is given in the text. That account seems coherent and probable, and there is a minuteness of detail about it which suggests that here, as in so many other parts of his work, Theophanes is copying from some register of events kept by persons who were contemporary with the actions which they record. (In the precision of his dates, the strange want of arrangement of his facts, and the general absence of polished style, Theophanes reminds one of the hypothetical document known as the Annals of Ravenna.)

Still, the date of Theophanes is a late one (758–816). He was separated by an interval of at least two centuries from the events with which we are concerned. His own historical knowledge was confused and often inaccurate. If any better authority could be produced against him he would be put out of court at once.

C. But the only authorities on the other side are much inferior to Theophanes. They are—

(1) The anonymous author of Antiquitates Constantinopolitanae; and,

(2) Joannes Tzetzes.

(1) From the anonymous writer's panegyrics of Alexius Comnenus it is inferred that he was a contemporary of that Emperor, who reigned from 1081 to 1118. The very end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century is thus the earliest date that can be assigned to this writer, who is therefore three centuries

[1] Καὶ ἔμεινεν ὁ αὐτὸς Βελισάριος ὑπὸ ἀγανάκτησιν.

NOTE D. later than Theophanes. His work is reprinted in Banduri's Imperium Orientale, which is generally included in the series of the Byzantine Historians. In a slight and superficial notice of Justinian and Belisarius (p. 7, ed. Paris) he says that Justinian, struck with admiration for the great deeds of Belisarius, erected to him an equestrian statue. 'But afterwards moved by envy towards that most eminent commander, he dug out his eyes and ordered that he should be seated at the [Monastery of the] Laurel, and that they should give him an earthenware vessel for the passers-by to throw pennies into it.' (Ὃς ὕστερον φθονήσας τῷ ῥηθέντι στρατηγικωτάτῳ Βελισαρίῳ ἐξώρυξε τούτου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, καὶ προσέταξε τοῦτον καθεσθῆναι εἰς τὰ Λαύρου, καὶ ἐπιδοῦναι αὐτῷ σκεῦος ὀστράκινον, καὶ ἐπιρρίπτειν αὐτῷ τοὺς διερχομένους ὀβολόν[1].)

(2) Joannes Tzetzes, a grammarian, lived at Constantinople about the middle of the twelfth century. He is described to us[2] (for I cannot claim any acquaintance with him at first hand) as a man of wide reading and some superficial cleverness, but devoid of taste or sound judgment, puffed up with self-conceit, and in fact a literary coxcomb. Among his poems, which, as he says, he wrote with the speed of lightning, is one which Tzetzes himself called 'An Historical Book,' but which is now more generally known by the name of the Chiliades, from its division into portions of one thousand lines each. This poem is written in a semi-accentual iambic rhythm, and consists of a mass of mythological and historical tales, told from memory, for Tzetzes swept all sorts of materials into his service, boasting that he remembered everything that he had ever read, and had read everything. In this strange farrago occur the following lines (iii. 334–348):—

Οὗτος ὁ Βελισάριος ὁ στρατηγὸς ὁ μέγας
Ἰουστινιανείοις ὢν ἐν χρόνοις στρατηλάτης
Πρὸς πᾶσαν τετραμέρειαν γῆν ἐφαπλώσας νίκας.
Ὕστερον φθόνῳ τυφλωθείς, ὢ τύχης τῆς ἀστάτου,
Ἔκπωμα ξύλινον κρατῶν, ἐβόα τῷ μιλίῳ
Βελισαρίῳ ὀβολὸν δότε τῷ στρατηλάτῃ.
Ὃν τύχη μὲν ἐδόξασεν, ἀποτυφλοῖ δ' ὁ φθόνος.
Ἄλλοι φασὶ τῶν χρονικῶν, μὴ τυφλωθῆναι τοῦτον,
Ἐξ ἐπιτίμων δ' ἄτιμον ἐσχάτως γεγονέναι
Καὶ πάλιν εἰς ἀνάκλησιν δόξης ἐλθεῖν προτέρας.

[1] The credit of observing this, which is perhaps the most important piece of evidence on behalf of the popular story, is due to Lord Mahon.

[2] In Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography.

These lines may be thus translated:— NOTE D.

'This Belisar a mighty general was,
Who, in the times when great Justinian reigned,
In every quarter of the world won fame.
But afterwards, O Fortune! fickle quean!
By envious tongues traduced, with blinded eyes,
He needs must hold a wooden bowl and cry[1],
"To General Belisar give an obol, pray.
Him Fortune favoured, Envy hath made blind."
Other historians say this was not so;
He ne'er was blinded, but his rank he lost,
And after gained the power he had before.'

Such a statement, coming from such a writer and with the qualifying lines at the end, does not seem to possess any great authority. But all the important evidence is now before the reader, and he can form his own judgment. For my part, notwithstanding Lord Mahon's gallant attempt to restore the credit of the 'Date obolum' story, I side with the majority of those who have examined the subject, and pronounce the story not absolutely disproved, but in the highest degree improbable.

[1] Τῷ μιλίῳ I have left untranslated. Does it mean sitting by the milestone? Or is it a corruption from τῷ ὁμίλῳ, 'To the crowd'?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE THIRD SIEGE OF ROME.

Authority.

Source:—

BOOK V. CH. 21.

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 35–40 (pp. 427–454).

Capture of Perugia.

BELISARIUS left the Imperial cause in Italy in a miserable condition. The garrison of Perugia, who for three years and more, notwithstanding the murder of the gallant Cyprian, had resisted the arms and the solicitations of Totila[1], were now overmastered, and before Belisarius reached Constantinople that high Etrurian fortress, taken by storm, not yielding to a surrender, had passed into the power of the Goths.

549.

Mutiny of the garrison in Rome, 548.

At Rome, the soldiers who had been placed in charge of the recovered City, with long arrears of pay due to them from the treasury, could endure no longer the spectacle of their commandant Conon, renewing as they believed the greedy game of the corn-traffic by which he and Bessas had enriched themselves during the second siege, and thus thriving upon their misery. Having risen in mutiny and slain their general they sent some of the Roman clergy as their ambassadors to

[1] There are some local legends as to Totila's siege of Perugia, commemorated by some curious pictures in the Pinacoteca: but I think these legends have no historical value.

548.

Constantinople, claiming a full amnesty for their crime and discharge of the arrears of pay due to them from the State[1]. Should these demands not be complied with, they declared that they would at once surrender the City to the Goths. Of course the Emperor had no choice but to comply, and to promise to pay from his exhausted treasury the money kept back by fraud and reclaimed by massacre.

Totila presses the siege of Rome more vigorously, 549.

This mutiny occurred several months before the recall of Belisarius. Now, after that event, Totila began to press the garrison of Rome more vigorously than he had done for the past two years. The cause which suddenly endowed the ancient capital of the world with so great importance in his eyes was a singular one, namely, his suit for the hand of a Frankish princess.

Attitude assumed by the Frankish kings.

Ever since the death of Clovis, and pre-eminently since the outbreak of the Gothic war, the Frankish Kings had been advancing steadily towards a position of greater legitimacy than any of the other barbarian royalties; and this pretension of theirs had been upon the whole acquiesced in by the Eastern Emperor, anxious above all things to prevent the weight of the Frankish battle-axe from being thrown into the scale of his enemies. Thus Justinian had formally sanctioned the cession made by the Ostrogoths of the south-east corner of Gaul to the Franks, and in doing so must inevitably have waived any shadow of claim which the Empire might still have been supposed to possess to the remaining nine-tenths of Gaul, the territory wrested from Syagrius, Alaric, and Godomar. Secure in this

[1] Τὰς ξυντάξεις ὅσας δὴ αὐτοῖς τὸ δημόσιον ὤφειλε (De B. G. iii. 30). Observe that the Empire is still *respublica*, and bears a name derived from δῆμος.

BOOK V. CH. 21.

Imperial recognition of their rights and in the loyal support which, as professors of the Athanasian form of Christianity, they received from the Catholic clergy, the Frankish partnership of kings clothed the substance of their power with more of the form of independent sovereignty than any of the Teutonic conquerors, whether at Toulouse or at Ravenna, had yet cared, or dared, to assume. Sitting in the Emperor's seat in the lordly amphitheatre of Arles, the long-haired Merwing watched the chariot-race and received the loyal acclamations of the people. Now too the sons of Clovis began to coin golden money bearing their own image and superscription; whereas hitherto all the barbarian monarchs (including, says Procopius, even the King of Persia himself) had been content to see their effigy on coins of silver, while upon the *solidi* of the nobler metal appeared the rude resemblance of the Caesar of Byzantium[1]. It is singular to find already working in

Procopius on the coinage of the barbarians.

[1] As this passage has an important bearing on the relation of the Empire to the new royalties, it will be well to quote it at length :—

'And now the Frankish rulers (οἱ Γερμανῶν ἄρχοντες) sit at Arles beholding the equestrian contest, and they have made a golden coin from the produce of the Gaulish mines, not bearing, according to custom, the image of the Emperor of the Romans, but their own. Although the King of the Persians has been accustomed to strike silver coins as he pleased, it has not been considered right for either him or any other barbarian king to stamp his own effigy on a *stater* of gold, even though the metal should be found in his own dominions: nor have they been able to make such coins pass current in exchange, though barbarians themselves should be the traffickers' (Procopius, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 33, p. 417).

This passage is commented upon by Mr. C. F. Keary in his valuable paper on the Coinage of Western Europe (Numismatic Chronicle, 1878, p. 70). I have also before me a letter from Mr. Keary on the same subject. He observes that the reasons

the middle of the sixth century a thought as to the superior legitimacy of Frankish conquest, which was not to bear fruit in visible deeds till two hundred and fifty years later, when Frankish Charles was hailed by the people of Rome as Imperator and Augustus.

Totila asks the hand of a Frankish princess in marriage.

While these ideas of a right, in some way differing from the mere right of conquest, were working in the minds of the bishops and counsellors of the Frankish Courts, came Totila's messengers to one of the kings of the Franks, probably Theudebert of Metz [1], asking on behalf of their master for his daughter's hand in marriage. The Frankish King refused the request, saying that that man neither was nor would ever be King of Italy who, having once been in possession of Rome, could not hold it, but destroyed a part of the city and abandoned the rest to his enemies. What became of Totila's matrimonial suit in after days we know not: but at any rate the taunt stung him to

Refusal.

which withheld some of the barbarian kings from coining money with their own effigies were no doubt commercial rather than political. It was not because they dared not do so, but because, in most instances, they doubted if money so stamped would pass current as freely as the well-known Byzantine type. Theudebert of Metz was the first barbarian king who put his own name in full (not in a monogram) on gold coins. But even this was not the beginning of a regular series of Merovingian gold coins, which we do not find till after 585. Gold coins of the later Sassanid kings of Persia are exceedingly rare (none in the British Museum or India Office Collection after 458), and Procopius is probably right in saying that Roman solidi passed current very freely, perhaps exclusively, in Persia in his day. Only this was not because the Sassanid kings *dared* not coin gold money.

[1] It does not appear to be stated who the King was: but the kings of Metz at this time had most intercourse with Italy. If it was Chlotochar his uncle, the princess sued for may have been Chlotsinda, afterwards wife of Alboin King of the Lombards.

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the quick, and he determined that the world should recognise him as master not only of Italy, but of Rome.

549. Diogenes commandant of Rome.

The garrison of Rome now consisted of three thousand picked soldiers commanded by Diogenes, one of the military household of Belisarius, who had distinguished himself in sallies and on the battlements during the first siege of Rome. Under his able generalship the utmost force of the garrison was put forth to repel the foe. Assault after assault was repulsed, and the baffled Totila was obliged to convert the siege into a blockade. Having taken Porto, he was able to make this blockade more rigorous than any which had preceded it. On the other hand, in the very depth of her recent fall, the Eternal City found a new source of safety. Diogenes had sown great breadths of land within the walls with corn. The great City, once brimming over with human life and filled in Horace's days with the babble of all human tongues, was now a little, well-ordered, and prosperous farm. In the summer of 549, when Totila stood before her walls, the golden ears were waving to the wind on the heights of the lordly Palatine and along the by-ways of the crowded Suburra.

Arrears of pay.

Notwithstanding this advantage, however, the desperate bankruptcy of Justinian's government played the game of Totila. Either the arrears stipulated for by the murderers of Conon had not been sent, or they had not been fairly divided among the soldiers. The little band of Isaurians who kept guard at the Porta San Paolo (the archway which spans the road to Ostia) deeply resented the withholding of their pay, which, as they declared, was now several years in arrear. Deeply too had sunk into their hearts the story of the

549.

splendid rewards given by Totila to those of their countrymen who three years before had betrayed the City to the Goths. Even now from the walls they could see these men arrayed in splendid armour riding side by side with the Gothic captains[1]. Accordingly they opened secret negotiations with the besiegers, and promised on a certain night to open the Gate of St. Paul. Totila, who knew that he could reckon on no such sleepy supineness among the besieged as had enabled him to effect his previous entry, resorted to a stratagem. When the fated night came, he put a party of trumpeters on board two little boats, and ordered them, before the first watch was over, to creep up the river and blow a loud blast from their trumpets as near as possible to the centre of the City. They did so. The Romans, not doubting that an attack was being made by the way of the river (perhaps just below the northern end of the Aventine Mount), left their various posts and all hurried to the threatened quarter. Meanwhile the Isaurian deserters opened the Pauline Gate, and the Gothic host, without trouble or loss of life, found themselves once more inside the City.

The Gate of St. Paul opened to the Goths.

Escape of Diogenes.

Of the garrison, many were slain by the Gothic soldiers in the streets, some fled northwards and eastwards, and succeeded in escaping from the sword of the barbarians; some, probably the most warlike of the host, headed by the brave Diogenes, rushed forth by the Porta San Pancrazio and along the

[1] The words of Procopius (ἅμα δὲ καὶ Ἰσαύρους ὁρῶντες τοὺς παραδόντας Ῥώμην τὰ πρότερα Γότθοις, κεκομψευμένους ἐπὶ μεγάλων τινῶν χρημάτων ὄγκῳ) point to some such visible display of the wealth of the deserters.

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Aurelian Way, hoping to reinforce the garrison which at Centumcellae (Civita Vecchia) was defending the last stronghold now left to the Empire in Central Italy. Totila, who anticipated this movement, had stationed a party of his best warriors in ambush on this road. The fugitives rushed headlong into the snare, and a fearful slaughter of them followed, from which only a very few escaped to Civita Vecchia. Among the few, however, was he whom Totila most desired to capture, their valiant leader Diogenes.

The Tomb of Hadrian defended.

A gallant Cilician, who bore the name of his great countryman Paul, and who, after acting for some time as superintendent of the household of Belisarius now commanded a troop of cavalry under Diogenes, collected a band of four hundred horsemen, and with them occupied the Tomb of Hadrian and the bridge of St. Peter which was commanded by it. Statueless, battered by the storm of war, and bereft of nearly all its Imperial adornment, but still

> 'A tower of strength
> That stood four-square to every wind that blew,'

rose the mighty Mausoleum. As soon as day dawned, the Goths advanced to the attack of the fortress, but owing to the peculiar character of the ground, could effect nothing, and perished by handfuls in the narrow approaches, where their crowded masses were exposed without cover to the shower of the Roman missiles. Seeing this, Totila at once called off his men, forbade all direct assault upon the Tomb, and gave orders to wait the surer work of hunger. Through the rest of that day and the following night the gallant followers of Paul remained without food. The next day they determined to kill some of the horses

549.

and feed upon their flesh; but repugnance to the strange banquet kept them till twilight still unfed. Then they said one to another, 'Were it not better to die gloriously than to linger on here in misery, and surrender after all?' They resolved accordingly to burst forth suddenly upon the besiegers, to slay as many of them as possible, and die, if they must die, in the thick of the battle. These strong men then, with sudden emotion, twined their arms around one another, and kissed one another's faces with the death-kiss, as knowing that they must all straightway perish[1]. Totila, seeing these gestures from afar and reading their import, sent to offer honourable terms of surrender. Either the garrison might depart unharmed to Constantinople, leaving their horses and arms behind them, and having taken an oath never again to serve against the Goths; or, if they preferred to keep their military possessions, and would enter *his* service, they should be treated in all things as the equals of their conquerors and new comrades. The despairing soldiers heard this message with delight. At first they were all for returning to Constantinople: then when they bethought them of the shame and the danger of returning unarmed and on foot over all the wide lands that intervened between them and the Emperor, and remembered how that Emperor had broken his share of the compact by leaving their pay so long in arrear, they changed their minds and elected to serve under the standards of the gallant Totila. Only two men remained faithful to the Emperor, Paul himself, and Mindes the Isaurian. They sought

Surrender of the garrison.

[1] Ἀλλήλους τοίνυν ἐξαπιναίως περιπλακέντες καὶ τῶν προσώπων καταφιλήσαντες τὴν ἐπὶ θανάτῳ ἠσπάζοντο, ὡς ἀπολούμενοι εὐθὺς ἅπαντες.

549. the King's presence and said, 'We have wives and children in our native land, and without them it is not possible for us to live. Send us therefore to Byzantium.' Totila knew them for true men, and giving them an escort and necessaries for the journey, started them on their road. There were still three hundred Roman soldiers, refugees at the various altars in the City. To them also Totila offered the same terms, and all accepted service under him.

Rome re-edified. There was no talk now of destroying, but only of keeping and embellishing Rome. Totila caused abundance of provisions to be brought into the City. The scattered remnants of the Senatorial families were brought back from their Campanian exile and bidden to inhabit their old homes without fear. As many as possible of the buildings which he himself had hewn down and burned with fire were raised up again. And when the Gothic King sat in the podium of the Circus Maximus, dressed in his royal robes, and gave the signal for the charioteers to start from the twelve *ostia*, he doubtless remembered the taunt of the Frankish King, and felt with pardonable triumph that he was now at least undoubted King of Italy.

549. Totila's embassy to Justinian. Totila then sent a Roman citizen named Stephen to Constantinople to propose terms of peace and alliance between the two nations, which had now been for near fifteen years engaged in deadly struggle: but the Emperor, immersed in theology and still unwilling to own himself defeated, did not even admit the ambassador to an interview. On hearing of this rebuff Totila marched first to Centumcellae and summoned it to surrender, offering the garrison the same terms which had been granted to the defenders of Hadrian's

Summons to Centumcellae (Civita Vecchia).

Tomb. Diogenes replied that it was not consistent with his honour to surrender the stronghold entrusted to him, for so little cause shown, but that if by a given day he had received no succours from his master, Centumcellae should be evacuated. Thirty hostages were given on each side for the fulfilment of this compact, the Goths being bound not to attack during the stipulated interval, and the Romans not to defend beyond it; and then the Gothic army, accompanied by the Gothic fleet, consisting of four hundred cutters and many larger vessels captured from the Imperialists, moved off to the south. BOOK V. CH. 21. 549.

Vengeance upon ungrateful Sicily was the great desire of Totila's heart, as it had been three years before when he forbade the Roman deacon Pelagius even to name her pardon. Some work, however, had yet to be done on the mainland. Reggio, which was under the command of Thorimuth, one of the former defenders of Osimo, was assaulted, but so bravely defended that the siege had to be turned into a blockade. Tarentum was easily taken. In the north, Rimini, once so stubbornly defended by John, was now betrayed into the hands of the Goths. From Ravenna, Verus the Herulian, whose drunken hardihood had once moved the mirth of Totila, made another of his wild sorties, in which he fell with many of his followers. Operations in the south of Italy. Operations in the north of Italy.

Just at the end of 549, or the beginning of 550, Reggio fell, the garrison being compelled by famine to surrender. Even before this town, nearly the last stronghold left to the Empire in Southern Italy, had been won, Totila had crossed the Straits of Messina into Sicily. His campaign here was one of plunder rather than conquest. All the chief cities of the 549-550. Fall of Rhegium. Sicily ravaged.

BOOK V. CH. 21.

549-550.

island, Messina, Syracuse, Palermo, seem to have resisted his arms; and only four fortresses, the names of which are not given, submitted to him. But far and wide through the island the villas of the Roman

550-551.

nobles bore witness to the invader's presence. The whole of the year 550 and (apparently) part of 551 were occupied by these devastations. At the end of that interval the King, collecting all his booty, large troops of horses and herds of cattle, stores of grain, fruit, and every other kind of produce of which he had despoiled the Sicilians, loaded his ships with the plunder and returned to Italy. It was said that he had been partly persuaded to abandon Sicily by his own Quaestor, a citizen of Spoleto named Spinus, who had the misfortune to be taken prisoner at Catana. This man, of Roman, not Gothic kin, persuaded his captors to consent to his being exchanged for a noble Roman lady who had fallen into Totila's hands. They at first scouted the idea of so unequal a bargain, but consented upon his promising to do his best to induce Totila to depart from the island. On being liberated he painted to his master in lively colours the danger that the Imperial armament then assembling on the other side of the Hadriatic might make a sudden swoop upon the coast in the neighbourhood of Genoa and carry off the Gothic women and children tranquilly abiding in those northern regions and supposed to be out of the reach of war. Totila listened to the advice, which was probably sound enough, with whatever motive given, and desisting from his work of plunder, returned to his true base of operations in Italy, leaving garrisons in his four Sicilian fortresses.

Spinus persuades Totila to evacuate Sicily.

Meantime the appointed day for the surrender of

Centumcellae had come and gone. Diogenes hearing, as every one else in Italy had heard, rumours of the great army collected in Dalmatia under the Emperor's nephew Germanus, considered himself absolved from his promise, and refused to surrender the Mediterranean fortress. The thirty hostages who had been mutually given and received, returned in safety to their friends. Of the further fortunes of the valiant governor we have no information. Centumcellae was certainly surrendered to the Goths[1], probably not later than the spring of 551: but Procopius has omitted to tell us the story of its final surrender and to inform us—what we would gladly have known—whether Diogenes experienced the generosity or the hot wrath of Totila.

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551. Diogenes refuses to surrender Centumcellae.

All these expectations, however, of help from Byzantium were for the present disappointed. Belisarius was recalled, as we have seen, early in 549. During all the rest of that year and the next, and until the middle of 551, nothing effectual was done for the relief of the Italians, who were still loyal to the Empire. Strange weakness and vacillation marked the counsels of the Emperor. The elderly Patrician Liberius, formerly ambassador from Theodahad to Justinian, a man of pure and upright character[2], but quite unversed in war, was appointed to the command of the relieving army. Then his appointment was cancelled. Some months afterwards he was again appointed, and actually set sail for Syracuse, where

Vacillation in the counsels of Justinian.

Appointment of Liberius to the command.

549.

[1] Because it required to be besieged by Narses in 552. Probably it is on account of the interval which separated the composition of his third and fourth books that Procopius has forgotten to give us the end of the siege of Centumcellae.

[2] See De Bello Gotthico, i. 4 (p. 25).

BOOK V. CH. 21.

550. Appointment of Artabanes, 550.

he succeeded in effecting some temporary relief for the city, straitly besieged by the Goths. He had accomplished this work, and had sailed away to Palermo, before he learned that the wavering Emperor had again revoked his commission and entrusted the command of the Sicilian army to Artabanes the Armenian prince, though, as we shall shortly see, he had little reason for trusting his loyalty. The ships of Artabanes were dispersed by a fierce storm while they were rounding the promontories of Calabria, but the General himself with one ship succeeded in making his way through the tumultuous seas to the island of Malta [1].

550. Expectation of the arrival of Germanus.

Then for a time all other names were merged in the renown of Germanus, the nephew of Justinian, who collected a great army at Sardica, and from whom all men either hoped or feared a triumphant ending to the Italian war. How these expectations were disappointed, and what were some of the causes of the strange but not inexplicable vacillation of Justinian during these years of Totila's victorious progress, must be told in the next chapter.

[1] The description given by Procopius (iii. 40) of the voyage of Artabanes and his escape to Malta illustrates the voyage and shipwreck of St. Paul (Acts xxvii).

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EXPEDITION OF GERMANUS.

Sources:—

Authorities.

PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico, iii. 31–32, 40 (pp. 405–416; 449–451). BOOK V. CH. 22.

For the life of Germanus Postumus, THEOPHYLACT (about 600 to 629) and THEOPHANES (758–816).

Character of Germanus, nephew of Justinian.

THE noblest and probably the eldest-born of the nephews of the childless Emperor, he who, as far as any one could be said to inherit in an elective monarchy, might be called the heir-presumptive of Justinian, was Germanus. An active and warlike general, he had struck terror into the Sclavonian marauders by the striking success of his campaign against them in the year of his uncle's accession. He had afterwards, as 527. we have seen, been successfully engaged in quelling the mutiny in Africa[1]. In his civil career he had equally won the approbation of his countrymen. Of a grave and dignified demeanour, both in the Palace and the Forum, yet ever ready to listen to the cry of the needy, and willing to give freely or to lend large sums without interest as the nature of the case required; an upright judge, a gracious and courteous

[1] See p. 36.

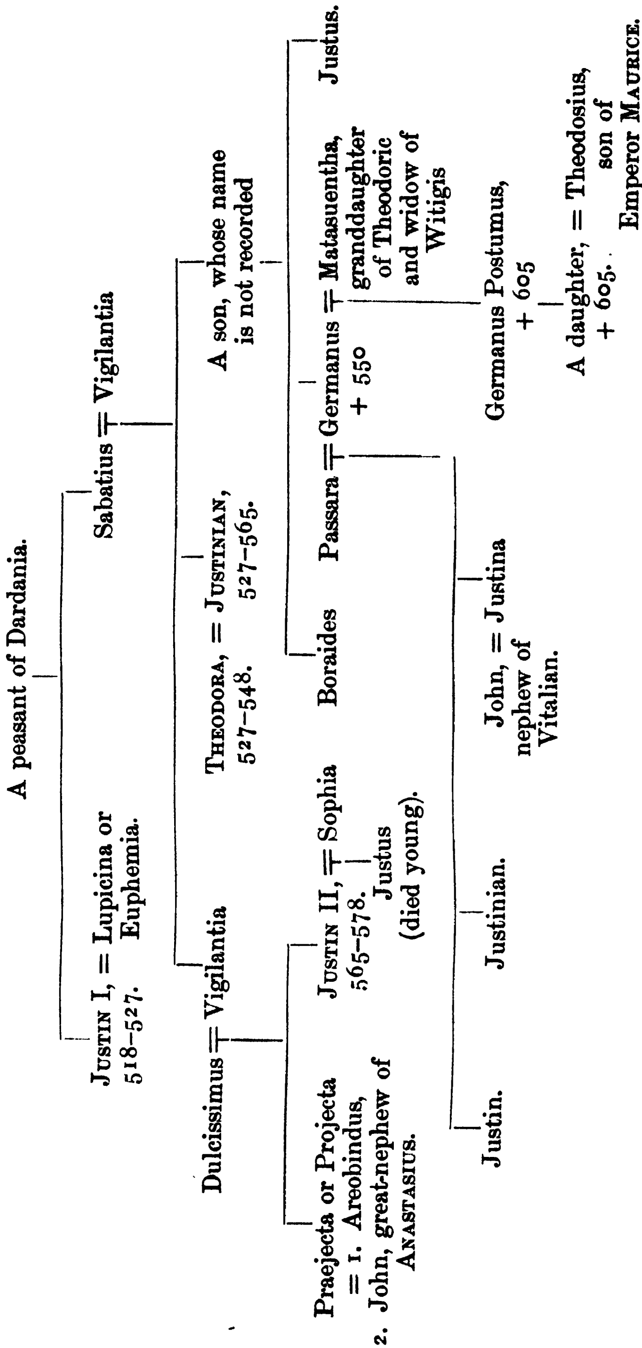
BOOK V. CH. 22.

host, keeping open house every day for the foremost citizens of Byzantium, yet studiously separating himself from the factions of the Circus and the Agora; such, according to Procopius (who, after his quarrel with Belisarius, transferred all his devotion to the Imperial nephew), was the warrior and statesman Germanus. By his wife Passara, who had died several years before the time which we have now reached, he had two sons, Justin and Justinian. The former was Consul in 540, the year of the fall of Ravenna, and while clothed with that dignity followed his father to battle against Chosroës[1]. The latter, like his brother often employed against the Sclavonian and Gepid troublers of the Empire, was also a valiant soldier and the useful lieutenant of his father.

Ill-favour shown to him at the Court.

But Germanus, though thus richly endowed with all qualities which should have made him a pillar of the throne of Justinian, perhaps we should rather say, because endowed with those qualities, was annoyed by a perpetual, if petty, persecution on the part of the Empress Theodora. The military talents of his sons were seldom made use of; those who wished to stand well at Court avoided his friendship; his daughter remained unmarried till the rough soldier John dared to incur a temporary displeasure for the sake of so brilliant an alliance and married the great-niece of the Emperor. The most recent grievance of Germanus had reference to the wealth of his lately deceased brother Boraides, who, leaving to his widow and only daughter so much only as was absolutely necessary to prevent his testament from being declared invalid, directed that all the rest of his large property should pass to

[1] Marcellinus Comes (p. 327, ed. Roncalli).


GENEALOGY OF JUSTINIAN.
A peasant of Dardania.
JUSTIN I, = Lupicina or Euphemia.
518–527.
Sabatius ╤ Vigilantia
Dulcissimus ╤ Vigilantia
THEODORA, = JUSTINIAN,
527–548. 527–565.
A son, whose name is not recorded
Praejecta or Projecta
= 1. Areobindus,
2. John, great-nephew of ANASTASIUS.
JUSTIN II, ╤ Sophia
565–578.
Justus (died young).
Boraides
Passara ╤ Germanus ╤ Matasuentha,
+ 550
granddaughter of Theodoric and widow of Witigis
Justus.
Justin.
Justinian.
John, = Justina
nephew of Vitalian.
Germanus Postumus,
+ 605
A daughter, = Theodosius,
+ 605.
son of Emperor MAURICE.

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Germanus[1]. This disposition was probably made in order to strengthen the claims of that branch of the family on the succession to the Imperial throne: and, probably for the very same reason, Justinian, or Theodora, intervening, ordered that the widow and daughter should be the sole legatees.

1 July, 548.

The death of Theodora might have been expected at once to place her enemy Germanus in a position of undisputed eminence at Court. Just at this time, however, some of the stored-up resentments of earlier years fermented into a conspiracy which well-nigh brought about the ruin of Germanus. There were at Constantinople two natives of Persarmenia[2], princes of the Arsacid line, who had risen high in the Imperial service, but each of whom had his own bitter grievance against Justinian and Theodora.

Grievances of Artabanes.

Artabanes, who in 545 stabbed the usurper Gontharis at Carthage and restored Africa to the Emperor[3], claimed one reward for his conspicuous services, the hand of Justinian's niece Praejecta[4], whom he had both avenged and rescued by his daring deed. She, in her gratitude, was willing, nay, eager thus to reward him, but there was one fatal obstacle. Artabanes had a wife already, whom he had put away and well-nigh forgotten, but

[1] Οὔσης δὲ αὐτῷ γυναικός τε καὶ παιδὸς μιᾶς τοσαῦτα τὴν παῖδα ἐκέλευεν ἔχειν ὅσα ὁ νόμος ἠνάγκαζε. The share which a testator's children were entitled to claim if the will was not to be declared *inofficiosum* was one-fourth under the Code of Justinian, afterwards enlarged by the Novels to one-third, or if there were more than five children to one-half (Moyle, i. 270).

[2] The part of Armenia which fell to the lot of Persia at the partition.

[3] See p. 39, n. 2.

[4] Widow of Areobindus who was slain by Gontharis.

who, now that his fortunes were brightening, showed no sign of forgetting him. This woman sought the succour of Theodora, whose chief redeeming virtue it was that she could not close her ears to the cry of a woman in distress. Theodora insisted upon Artabanes taking back his long-discarded wife, and gave Praejecta to another husband. The tall, stately, silent Armenian rose high in the favour of the Emperor; he became *Magister Militum in Praesenti*, General of the Foederati, and at last Consul; but all these honours and emoluments could not deaden his sense of the wrong which he conceived himself to have endured, in that he had lost the woman whom he loved and was daily in the company of the woman whom he hated.

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Grievances of Arsaces.

While Artabanes, as all men knew, was thus brooding over his matrimonial grievance, his fellow-countryman Arsaces diligently fanned the flame of his resentment. The reasons for the discontent of Arsaces were more discreditable than those which had alienated Artabanes. He had been detected in treasonable negotiations with Chosroës, and had been punished, not by the sentence of death which he richly deserved, but by a slight flogging and by being paraded through the City on a camel with the marks of his chastisement still upon him. This clemency was wasted on the fierce Oriental, and he now was for ever at the ear of Artabanes, accusing him of inopportune bravery, and timidity which a woman would be ashamed of. 'You slew Gontharis though he was your friend and you were a guest at his banquet. And now you scruple about killing Justinian, the hereditary enemy of your race, and him who has done you this grievous wrong. And yet to any one who will reflect on the matter for

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a moment, the assassination of Justinian will seem to be a very simple and easy action, and one that no one need fear to attempt. There he sits till far into the night in his unsentinelled library, with a few doting priests around him, wholly intent on turning over the precious rolls which contain the Christian oracles. You have nothing to fear from the relatives of the Emperor. Germanus, the most powerful of them all, is smarting under wrongs more grievous even than ours; and he and his gallant young sons, I doubt not, will eagerly join in our conspiracy.' By such arguments as these, Artabanes was at length induced to enter into the plot, which was then communicated to another Armenian, Chanaranges by name, a handsome and volatile young man, who had no particular grievance against the Emperor, but was willing to join with a light heart in this glorious scheme for murdering an unguarded and elderly man in the midst of his theological studies.

Arsaces draws Artabanes into conspiracy against the Emperor's life.

Justin, son of Germanus, sounded.

The next step was to secure the adhesion of Germanus and his family, and for this purpose the elder son Justin, a youth with the first manly down upon his lips, was sounded by Arsaces. After swearing a tremendous oath that he would reveal what was about to be told him to no man save his father only, the young man was first artfully reminded of all the grievances which his father, his brother, and he had received at the hands of Justinian, ending with the crowning injustice of withholding from them the inheritance of his uncle Boraides. 'Nor,' said Arsaces, 'are these injuries likely soon to come to an end. Belisarius, your enemy, is ordered home from Italy. He is reported to be even now half-way through Illyria.

When he comes, you will find that you are treated even more contemptuously than before.' And with that, Arsaces in a whisper revealed to him the design to kill his uncle the Emperor; and gave the names of Artabanes and Chanaranges as already privy to the plot.

548.

Justin tells Germanus.

The young Justin turned giddy with contending emotions as the deed, so wicked and yet opening up the possibility of such a welcome change in his condition, was disclosed to him; but the nobler passion of horror at the crime prevailed, and in a few curt words he told the tempter that neither he nor his father could ever be accomplices in such a deed. He then departed and told his father what he had heard. Germanus, perplexed at the tidings and seeing danger round him on every hand, violated his son's oath by unfolding the whole matter to his friend Marcellus, Captain of the Palace-guards.

Germanus consults Marcellus.

Marcellus was a man of somewhat austere character, careless of money, of pleasure, and of popularity, but a lover of justice; one whom his natural taciturnity and almost churlishness of temper made a singularly faithful confidant [1]. The advice, the dangerous advice, as it proved, which he gave, was not to hurry the conspirators into crime, nor to run the risk of a counter-accusation by making an immediate disclosure to the Emperor, but to draw them on to a confession of their villainy in the presence of an unsuspected witness, and

[1] This is the character given of him by Procopius (De B. G. iii. 32, p. 412). It seems clear that he cannot be the same person as the Marcellus 'Argentarius' who joined in the conspiracy of Sergius against the Emperor's life in 563. See p. 533, n. 3.

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A trap laid for the conspirators.

thus to make certain that punishment should fall only on the guilty. This treacherous scheme of unmasking treachery was accordingly adopted. The young Justin was told to re-open the negotiations which he had abruptly closed. Arsaces was now dumb concerning the plot, but Chanaranges, full of eagerness for the conspiracy, desired nothing better than to have a conversation first with Justin and then with his father respecting it. On a given day, therefore, he repaired by appointment to the palace of Germanus. In the *triclinium* where they met, a thick muslin curtain hung from the ceiling to the floor, veiling the couch on which the master of the house was wont to recline at the banquet. It veiled also, though Chanaranges knew it not, the crouching form of Leontius[1], a man with the highest reputation for justice and truthfulness—according to the standard of Byzantium in the sixth century—who had been selected, apparently with no reluctance on his part, for the honourable office of eaves-dropper.

This was the purport of the conversation of Chanaranges as to the plans of the conspirators. 'We have reflected that if we slay Justinian while Belisarius is still on his way to Constantinople, we shall be no nearer our purpose of setting you, O Germanus! on the throne. For Belisarius will then certainly collect an army in Thrace to avenge the murder of the Emperor, and when he appears before the gates of the City we shall have no means of repelling him. We must therefore wait till he has actually arrived, and is

[1] Leontius was son-in-law of Athanasius who was sent as ambassador to Theodahad in 535. Mr. Bryce suggests that he may be the same as the Leontius who was employed on the Digest.

closeted with the Emperor in the palace. Then, late in the evening, we will resort thither with daggers in our hands and slay Justinian, Belisarius, and Marcellus all at once. After that we can dispose of matters as we will.'

Germanus takes two other noblemen into his confidence.

When Marcellus heard from Leontius of this atrocious proposition, he still, for some mysterious reason, postponed reporting it to the Emperor. Germanus however, truly perceiving that the mere fact of listening unmoved to such a conversation must subject him to the most odious imputations, took two other great officials into his confidence. These were Constantian, late general in Dalmatia and governor of Ravenna, and Buzes, the unhappy ex-consul who had been kept for twenty-eight months in a dark dungeon by Theodora, but who appears to have been still loyal to her Imperial spouse.

Marcellus discloses the secret.

Tidings soon came of the near approach of the returning Belisarius. Then at length the taciturn Marcellus informed his master of the danger impending over both their lives. Artabanes and some of his confidential officers were put to the torture, and the Senate was summoned to the Palace to read and to deliberate upon the depositions thus obtained. Of course the names of Germanus and Justin were among the first mentioned by the criminals in their agony. When these names were read out, many faces in the assembly were turned with horror and amazement to Germanus; and it seemed as if nothing could save him from immediate condemnation. When he told the whole story, however, and called on Marcellus, Leontius, Constantian, and Buzes as vouchers for its truth, the tide of opinion turned, and the Senate by an

The Senate summoned.

Germanus honourably acquitted.

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unanimous vote acquitted Germanus and his son of all evil designs against the Republic[1].

Anger of Justinian against his nephew.

Not so, however, the Emperor. When the Senators went in to the Presence Chamber to report the result of their deliberations, he burst into a torrent of angry invective against his nephew for his tardiness in bringing him tidings of the plot. Two of the nobles, in order to curry favour with the Emperor, affected to sympathise with his views, and thus hounded him on to yet more violent expressions. The rest of the Senate stood trembling and silent, ashamed to condemn and afraid to acquit Germanus. At this crisis the stern rugged character of Marcellus shone forth in all its nobleness. He loudly asserted that all the blame, if blame there was, for the delay must rest upon his shoulders; that Germanus had consulted him at the earliest possible moment, and that he from motives of policy had insisted that Justinian should not then be told of the plot. He thus at length succeeded in mollifying the wrath of the Emperor against his nephew, earning himself great praise from all men for his fearless truthfulness.

Appeased by Marcellus.

Lenient treatment of the conspirators.

The clemency of Justinian's nature was shown in a conspicuous manner towards those who had planned his murder. Artabanes was for the time deprived of his office, but, as we have seen, received next year an important command in Sicily. All the conspirators were kept for a time in honourable confinement in the Palace, not in the public gaol, and even this punishment was probably not of long duration.

A ruler who knew that his life was in danger from

[1] Αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τοῦ παιδὸς ἀπεψηφίσαντο ἅπαντες, ἅτε οὐδὲν ἐς τὴν πολιτείαν ἡμαρτηκότων.

plots such as that of Arsaces might be excused for some vacillation in the choice and the promotion of his generals. Other cares were also pressing upon the wearied brain of Justinian, and making even the recovery of Italy seem a light matter in comparison with them. The sneer of the Armenian about the midnight hours spent in turning over theological treatises in the company of doting priests was not undeserved. Justinian was now, and had been for the last five years, deep in the controversy of 'The Three Chapters.' When Pope Vigilius, who had been summoned to Constantinople for this very purpose, together with the other Roman refugees, the Patrician Gothigus[1] at their head, pressed upon him the necessity of a vigorous effort for the deliverance of Italy, he replied, in substance, that the affairs of Italy should have his attention when he had succeeded in reconciling the contradictions of Christians as to their common faith[2]. A long adjournment certainly of his performance of the humbler duties of a ruler.

548. The cares of Justinian.

There were also other wars going on in the Empire, some much nearer home than that of Italy, which distracted the energies of Justinian. The eternal contest with Persia was at this time transferred to the eastern end of the Black Sea, to the region now known as

The Lazic war.

[1] So Procopius writes the name (iii. 35, p. 429). As he has before mentioned Cethegus (iii. 13, p. 328), and there is no variation in the MSS. at either place, I do not see how we can alter the former name into the latter as some writers have done.

[2] Procopius virtually asserts this, but does not put the words into the Emperor's mouth: *Βασιλεὺς δὲ Ἰταλίας μὲν ἐπηγγέλλετο προνοήσειν αὐτός, ἀμφὶ δὲ τὰ Χριστιανῶν δόγματα ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον διατριβὴν εἶχεν, εὖ διαθέσθαι τὰ ἐν σφίσιν ἀντιλεγόμενα σπουδάζων τε καὶ διατεινόμενος μάλιστα* (iii. 35; p. 429).

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Mingrelia, where from 549 to 557 what was called the Lazic war was being waged with varying fortunes, but upon the whole with a preponderance of success on the side of the Romans.

The Gepids and Lombards.

North of the Danube there was discontent, and a dangerous spirit of enterprise abroad among the fierce neighbours of the Empire. Where the Drave and the Theiss flow into the Danube, the Gepidae and Lombards were fiercely disputing with one another, imploring the intervention of Justinian, and then joining to attack his general when he entered their land. Further east, in the country which we now call Wallachia, the Sclavonians, long despised and comparatively harmless, were becoming a terrible scourge of the Empire. In the year 549 three thousand of these barbarians crossed the Danube, marched to the Hebrus, defeated Roman armies more numerous than their own, took captive the Roman General Asbad—one of the sumptuously-equipped *Candidati*, the pampered guardsmen of the Emperor—and after cutting off long strips of skin from his back, burned the miserable man alive. Then they pressed on to Topirus on the coast of the Aegean, nearly opposite the isle of Thasos, and only twelve days' journey from Constantinople. They drew forth the garrison by a feigned flight, took the city, ransacked its treasures, slew the men to the number of fifteen thousand, and carried off all the women and children into captivity. Thus they spread throughout Illyria and Thrace, ravaging the lands and torturing the inhabitants with fiendish cruelty. The terrible punishment of impalement, with which the Danubian lands have since been fatally familiarised, inflicted by men of another race than the Sclavonian, now makes its

Invasion of the Sclavonians, 549.

appearance, and is described by Procopius with ghastly accuracy and vivid power. At length, drunk with their debauch of blood, the Sclavonians retreated across the Danube, driving the endless files of their weeping captives before them, and leaving all Thrace and Illyria full of unburied corpses.

BOOK V. CH. 22.

549.

Second Sclavonic invasion, 550.

Two more invasions of these barbarians followed in the next year. It was thought by some that Totila had hired them to harass Justinian and prevent his attending to the affairs of Italy: but men who had been able to gratify their savage passions with so little labour or danger to themselves were not likely to require much pressing to undertake another raid into the feebly-defended Empire.

Germanus at length appointed commander-in-chief for the Italian war.

It will thus be seen that there was some reason why Justinian (stripped as he was by death of his bold and strenuous partner Theodora) should hesitate and delay and waver in his counsels with reference to the war in Italy. The name of Germanus as commander-in-chief for this war had been proposed shortly after the recall 549.
of Belisarius. Then the Emperor changed his mind and appointed the elderly and unwarlike Liberius. This appointment, as we have seen, had soon been cancelled, again made and again revoked. Now, probably at the beginning of 550, Justinian, while sending 550.
Artabanes to Sicily, took the bold and wise step of declaring Germanus, as Belisarius had been declared, commander with absolute powers for the whole war against Totila and the Goths[1]. He gave him a large army, and instructions to add to it by raising new levies in Thrace and Illyria. More to the surprise of

[1] Αὐτοκράτορα δὲ τοῦ πρὸς Τωτίλαν τε καὶ Γότθους πολέμου Γερμανὸν κατεστήσατο τὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνεψιόν.

BOOK V. CH. 22. 550.

his councillors, he unloosed his purse-strings and sent his nephew a large store of treasure. To this Germanus, whose heart was set on restoring Italy, as he had already restored Africa after the rebellion of Stutza to the obedience of the Empire [1], added large sums from his own private fortune. The fame of so popular a commander, and the unwonted abundance of money at head-quarters, soon attracted large numbers of eager recruits, especially from among the barbarians of the Danube. All these flocked to Sardica (now the Bulgarian capital, Sophia), where Germanus had set up his standard. His son-in-law, the valiant and unscrupulous John, was of course with him. With him too were his martial sons Justin and Justinian, eager to embrace the long-desired opportunity of showing their prowess in war. There was Philemuth King of the Heruli, who had fought under Belisarius in his first Italian command: and there—a name of ill-omen for the Roman power in Italy—were one thousand heavy-armed soldiers of the Lombard nation.

Officers of Germanus.

Germanus marries Matasuentha.

The most potent, however, of all the allies of Germanus, the one who most daunted the hearts of the Goths, already dispirited at the thought of so great a commander coming against them, was his newly-wedded wife. This was none other than Matasuentha, widow of King Witigis and granddaughter of the great Theodoric. Again was the Amal princess married to a husband considerably older than herself [2]; but there are some slight indications that this union was more to her taste than that with the humbly-born Witigis.

[1] See p. 36.

[2] We may perhaps fix the birth of Germanus approximately at A.D. 500; that of Matasuentha at 520.

At any rate, she was now a member of the Imperial family, and, as her countryman Jordanes proudly records, a *legitimate* Patrician[1]. The three references made to this marriage by the Gothic historian[2], who wrote within two years after its celebration, show the great importance attached to it by his nation, and entirely confirm the statement of Procopius[3] as to the depression which came over the soldiers of Totila at the thought of fighting with one who was now in a certain sense a member of the family of the great Theodoric.

Germanus beats back the Sclavonians.

Both hopes and fears, however, springing out of the appointment of Germanus to the supreme command were alike to be proved vain. The first of the two Sclavonic invasions of the year 550, in which the marauders penetrated as far as Naissus in Servia, alarmed the Emperor, who sent orders to Germanus to suspend his westward march and succour Thessalonica, which was threatened by the barbarians. The terror of his name, and the remembrance of the great deeds which he had wrought twenty years before in the Danubian lands, sufficed to turn the Sclavonians from their purpose and to divert their march into Dalmatia. In two days more the army would have resumed its interrupted journey towards Italy: but suddenly Germanus was attacked by disease—possibly

Death of Germanus (autumn, 550).

[1] 'Et Vitigi rebus excedente humanis, Germanus Patricius . . . eandem [Mathasuentam] in conjugio sumens, *patriciam ordinariam fecit*' (De Rebus Geticis, xiv). Is there not here a reference to the fact that she was already Patricia of a somewhat lower grade in consequence of Witigis having been dignified with the title of Patrician? (See De Reb. Get. lx.)

[2] Cap. xiv, xlviii, and lx.

[3] De B. G. iii. 39 (p. 448).

BOOK V. Ch. 22.

a fever caught during his marches over the corpse-strewn valleys of Thrace—and after a very short illness he died.

The picture drawn of this prince has necessarily been taken from the pages of his partisan Procopius, who very likely has painted in too bright colours the character of his patron: but after making all necessary allowance for this partiality, it seems impossible to deny that here was a man of great gifts, of many noble qualities, and of splendid possibilities. As with a rising English statesman who dies before he attains 'Cabinet-rank,' the premature death of Germanus has prevented him from leaving a great name in history. Had it fallen to his lot to defeat Totila, to restore the Western Empire, to bequeath its crown to a long line of descendants boasting a combined descent from Theodoric and Justinian, the name of Germanus might be at this day one of the most familiar landmarks on the frontier line between ancient and modern history.

Birth of Germanus, posthumous son of Germanus by Matasuentha.

In a few lines we must trace the subsequent history of the family of Germanus, since that is now the sole remaining branch of the family of Theodoric. After the death of her husband, Matasuentha bore a son, who was named after his father, Germanus. In this infant the hopes of Jordanes were centred when he wrote his Gothic history. It has been suggested[1] that there was a scheme on the part of a nationalist Italian party headed by Vigilius to proclaim this infant as heir to Theodoric, or Emperor of the West, and obtain his recognition by Justinian, wearied out

[1] By Schirren ('De Ratione quae inter Jordanem et Cassiodorum intercedit,' p. 90).

as he was by the war. The 'De Rebus Geticis' of Jordanes is thus supposed to have been a sort of political pamphlet written in the interest of this combination. The theory is an ingenious one, but seems to lack that amount of contemporary evidence which would make it anything more than a theory. In any case, however, it is interesting to note that we have now reached the date of the composition of the treatises of Jordanes, with the contents of which we have become so familiar. The death of Germanus and the birth of his posthumous son are the last events of importance recorded by that writer, and it is clear that both the 'De Regnorum Successione' and the 'De Rebus Geticis,' or, as Mommsen prefers to call them, the 'Romana et Getica Jordanis,' were written in the year 551.

Jordanes.

History of Germanus Postumus.

As for Germanus Postumus, the child of Matasuentha, he appears to have played a respectable, if not a highly distinguished part, as a great nobleman of Constantinople. His daughter married Theodosius, son of the Emperor Maurice; and in the tumults which ended the reign of that Emperor, the popularity of Germanus caused him to be spoken of as a suitable candidate for the Imperial purple. The rumour of such a project nearly cost him his life, owing to the suspicious fears of Maurice. On the fall of that Emperor, the fierce and illiterate soldier who succeeded him, Phocas, made a show of offering the diadem to Germanus, but the latter, knowing well how precarious would be the life of an Emperor elected under such conditions, wisely declined the proffered dignity. When the cruel character of the tyrant who thereupon ascended the throne had exhibited itself, and

602.

BOOK V. CH. 22. his unfitness for the diadem was made clear to all men, Germanus made two attempts to dethrone him, by reviving the old loyalty of the Blue Faction to the house of Maurice, and appealing to the compassion of the populace on behalf of Constantina, widow of that
604. Emperor. The first of these attempts cost him his official position, for he was ordered to cut off his hair
605. and become a priest. The second cost him, and those on whose behalf he was conspiring, their lives. Constantina and her three daughters were slain with the sword upon the very spot where Maurice and his five sons had been put to death three years before; and Germanus with his daughter (the widow of the young Theodosius) were beheaded upon the little island of Prote in the Sea of Marmora, five miles south of Chalcedon. There, within sight of the towers and domes of Constantinople, associated for ever with the fame of Justinian, so often gazed upon with wonder by the young Theodoric, perished the two in whose veins flowed the blended blood of Emperor and King, the last descendants that History can discern of the glorious lineage of the Amals.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SORROWS OF VIGILIUS.

Authorities.

Sources:—

The letters and manifestoes of VIGILIUS and JUSTINIAN in reference to the controversy of the Three Chapters, as published in the 69th volume of Migne's Patrologia, and the Breviarium of LIBERATUS already described. Some valuable information as to the controversy is also to be obtained from the works of FACUNDUS, Bishop of Hermiana in the African province of Byzacena (published in the 67th volume of Migne's Patrologia). Facundus was throughout the whole dispute a persistent opponent of the condemnation of the Three Chapters, and apparently the most learned of the writers on that side of the question. His treatise 'Pro Defensione Trium Capitulorum,' in twelve books, though too diffuse, is a very creditable performance, written in better Latin than many of his contemporaries used, and, upon the whole, well argued. The tone of manly but respectful remonstrance in which he addresses Justinian presents a refreshing contrast to the servility of most of the Byzantine ecclesiastics. After his return to Africa Facundus joined his brother bishops in excommunicating Pope Vigilius and all who had condemned the Three Chapters. The bishops who took part in this excommunication were severely handled by the Emperor; and Facundus apparently had to spend the remainder of his life in exile and concealment. In these disadvantageous circumstances and in broken health he composed, at the request of his brother, a short treatise entitled 'Liber contra Mocianum,' to justify their conduct in excommunicating their antagonists. The book is more bitter

in tone than his larger work, and is remarkable for the great freedom of its utterances concerning Pope Vigilius, whom, however, he as much as possible avoids mentioning by name.

All the foregoing are strictly contemporary authorities. The so-called Anastasius Bibliothecarius in the LIBER PONTIFICALIS presents the usual puzzling admixture of graphic, apparently contemporary, details and obvious deviations from the truth of history.

Guides:—

I have chiefly followed the guidance of Hefele's Conciliengeschichte (vol. ii. 798–911), and have freely availed myself of his valuable labours. Milman's History of Latin Christianity, Baronius, and Bower have also been consulted. The following articles in Smith's Dictionaries of Christian Biography and Antiquities are very helpful—Justinian, Ibas, Chalcedon.

Difficulty of correctly estimating the Pontificate of Vigilius. 537–555.

BEFORE we sit as spectators to watch the last act of the drama of Imperial Restoration in Italy, we must study for a short time one of the most perplexed and entangled passages in Papal History, that which relates to the Pontificate of Vigilius. The story is made difficult partly by the fact that it is a battle-ground for the champions and the opponents of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, a doctrine which a secular historian may claim the privilege of passing by in silence, refusing to be drawn by the course of his narrative into the attitude either of a denier or of a maintainer of its truth. But the character of Pope Vigilius himself, and the bitter theological controversies in which he was involved, and in which it was his fate to please neither of the two contending parties, cause the contemporary notices of his life to be obscure and contradictory beyond the ordinary quality even of ecclesiastical history.

Let us briefly recapitulate what has been already

Early career of Vigilius.

said concerning the early career of this Pontiff. That he belonged to one of the great official families of Rome is proved by the fact that the Senator Reparatus was his brother[1]. Throughout his life we may perceive some indications that his natural sympathies were with the aristocracy and the Court, and that some of his difficulties arose from a vain attempt to reconcile these aristocratic instincts with the bold part which a Pope in the Sixth Century was expected to play on behalf of the people and the popular enthusiasm of the lesser clergy. His unsuccessful attempt to obtain the first place in the Roman Church by the mere nomination of Pope Boniface II (an attempt which perhaps indicates the disposition of the Roman nobles to make the Papacy the exclusive possession of their own order) left Vigilius in the humiliating position of a defeated intriguer. Thenceforward he probably knew that he had no chance of obtaining the Pontificate by a fair vote of the clergy and people of Rome. The influence which, as an ecclesiastic, member of a great Roman family, he still possessed, and which was sufficient to obtain for him the important position of Nuncio (Apocrisiarius) at the Court of Constantinople, must therefore be used in a different and less open manner. In his official intercourse with the great personages of that Court he had abundant opportunity for observing how the heart of Theodora was set on the restoration of the Monophysites to high places in the Church, and how seldom that upon which Theodora had set her heart failed to be granted in the end by her Imperial consort.

Hence came those secret negotiations with the

[1] See p. 187.

BOOK V. CH. 28. Empress which have been already referred to[1], and which led to the downfall of the unhappy Silverius.

537. His intrigues for the Papacy. We view with some distrust the circumstantial statements of historians as to conversations and correspondence which must necessarily have been known to extremely few persons; but, according to these statements, the terms of the bargain were that Theodora should address a letter to Belisarius directing him to make Vigilius Pope, and should also present to the new Pontiff 700 lbs. weight of gold [£28,000]. Vigilius on his part undertook to overthrow the authority of the Council of Chalcedon, and to write to Theodosius, Anthimus, and Severus, the Monophysite Patriarchs of Alexandria, Constantinople, and Antioch[2], acknowledging them as brethren in the faith[3].

Made Pope on the deposition of Silverius. Armed with this letter from the all-powerful Theodora, Vigilius sailed for Rome and sought an interview with Belisarius[4]. Handing him the Empress's mandate he promised the General 200 lbs. weight of gold [£8,000] as the price of his assistance in procuring the

[1] See pp. 222–3.

[2] Either actually ruling or deposed.

[3] The fullest statement of this alleged compact is given by Liberatus (Breviarium, cap. xxii) as follows:—

'Augusta vero vocans Vigilium Agapeti diaconum, profiteri sibi secreto ab eo flagitavit, ut si papa fieret, tolleret synodum, et scriberet Theodosio, Anthimo et Severo, et per epistolam suam eorum firmaret fidem; promittens dare ei praeceptum ad Belisarium, ut papa ordinaretur, et dari centenaria septem. Lubenter ergo suscepit Vigilius promissum ejus, amore episcopatus et auri, et facta professione Romam profectus est.'

[4] Liberatus asserts that Vigilius negotiated at first for the succession to Agapetus, and was surprised on reaching Rome to find Silverius already elected. But his information is not very accurate. He represents the first interview with Belisarius as taking place *at Ravenna*, which is certainly a mistake.

coveted dignity. The result of this interview was, if we are to believe the biographers, the accusation against Silverius, the summons to the Pontiff to appear in the Pincian Palace, Antonina's insolent demeanour, the pallium stripped from off the Pope's shoulders, and the coarse monastic garb hung round them in its stead.

Exercise of the Imperial prerogative in the deposition of Silverius.

This deposition of a Pope by the authority of the Emperor was a high-handed, probably an unpopular act; but there is no reason to doubt that it was acquiesced in by the clergy and people of Rome, and that Vigilius was regarded as his lawful successor. The accusation against Silverius was a political one. Not heterodoxy in doctrine, but a treacherous scheme for opening the gates of the City to the Goths, was the charge on account of which he met with such rough handling in the Pincian Palace[1]; and of such an offence the Emperor or his deputy seems to have been considered a competent judge. The deposition of Silverius comes therefore under the same category with the deposition of the Byzantine Patriarchs, Euphemius and Macedonius; and is chiefly noteworthy as showing how dangerous to the independence of the Papacy was that Imperial authority which the Popes had with so light a heart brought back into the circle of Italian politics[2].

[1] Lord Mahon thinks there was some foundation for the charge (Life of Belisarius, p. 227).

[2] My reason for making this remark is that Baronius has persuaded himself that the intrusion of Vigilius into the Papal office was not acquiesced in by the Roman Church, that he was in fact looked upon as an Anti-Pope, and so continued to be considered, till, after the death of Silverius, a fresh and regular election by the clergy and people of Rome gave him a right to sit in the Chair

BOOK V. CH. 23.

537. Vigilius hesitates about paying the covenanted price for the Papacy.

When the new Pope was firmly seated in his throne, the two authors of his elevation naturally called upon him to fulfil his share of the compact with each of them. Avarice made him unwilling to perform one of his promises; the loyalty to Chalcedon which seemed to nestle in the folds of the Papal pallium, indisposed him to perform the other. As we have seen, he pleaded to Belisarius that unless Silverius were surrendered to him he could not pay the promised purchase-money. Whether, upon the surrender and death of his predecessor, the two hundredweight of gold were transferred from the vaults of St. Peter's to the head-quarters of Belisarius, history does not inform us; but the Pope does seem to have attempted, in a half-hearted clandestine way, to fulfil his contract with Theodora. As for overthrowing the Council of Chalcedon [1], that was absurdly impossible; but he did write a letter [2] addressed 'To my Lords and dear

His letter to the Monophysite Patriarchs.

of St. Peter. Of any such second election it may I believe be safely affirmed that there is not a trace in the authorities. For controversial reasons Baronius endeavours to prolong this period of the Anti-Papacy of Vigilius as much as possible, and therefore dates the death of Silverius in 540. The authorities, however, seem to speak of that event as following by a not very long interval after his deposition (18 November, 537). We know that it occurred on the 21st of June (or May, for the MSS. differ on this point), and it seems probable that it was in the year 538; but as the journeyings of Silverius during his exile are somewhat extensive for an interval of seven months, it is *possible* that we should rather assign it to 539.

[1] 'Tolleret synodum.'

[2] There is some force in the arguments of Baronius against the genuineness of this letter. It is not easy to understand why no allusion should have been made to such a document in the fierce controversies which Vigilius had to pass through in later years. Still, this is only an argument *e silentio*. Victor Tunnunensis and

Brethren in the love of Christ our Saviour, the Bishops Theodosius, Anthimus, and Severus.' In this letter he said, 'I know that your Holinesses have already heard the report of my faith; nevertheless, to meet the wishes of my glorious daughter, the Patrician Antonina, I write these presents to assure you that the same faith which you hold I hold likewise, and have ever held. I know that your Brotherhood will gladly receive these things which I write. At the same time it is necessary that this letter should not be read by any one, but rather that your Wisdom should still profess to regard me as chief among your opponents, that I may the more easily carry through to the end the things which I now undertake. Pray God for me, my dear Brethren in Christ[1].' To this letter was appended a confession of faith which, if not actually Monophysite, went, in the opinion of his contemporaries, perilously near to the edge of that heresy[2].

Vigilius refuses publicly

For a time this secret recognition of her partisans may have satisfied Theodora, but as the years went on

Liberatus, both of whom insert the letter and ascribe it to Vigilius, are good contemporary authorities, and, as staunch Chalcedonians, were not likely to be imposed upon by a Monophysite forgery, which Baronius pronounces it to have been.

[1] 'Oportet ergo ut haec quae vobis scribo nullus agnoscat: sed magis tanquam suspectum me Sapientia vestra ante alios existimet habere, ut facilius possim haec quae coepi, operari et perficere.'

[2] Liberatus stigmatises it as 'resolvens Tomum Papae Leonis.' But surely the first and most important sentence, 'Non duas Christum confitemur naturas sed ex duabus naturis compositum unum filium, unum Christum, unum Dominum,' is susceptible of an orthodox interpretation. Dioscorus is included among the objects of his anathema.

BOOK V. CH. 23.

to recognise the deposed Monophysite Patriarch of Constantinople.

and still Anthimus remained in exile and apparently under the ban of St. Peter, she pressed for a public fulfilment of the bargain by virtue of which Vigilius had become Pope. But Vigilius was now firm in his seat and could assume the attitude of unbending orthodoxy. The letter which he now sent was of this purport[1]. 'Be it far from me, Lady Augusta, that I should do this thing. Aforetime I spoke wrongly and foolishly: but now will I in no wise consent to recall a man that is an heretic and under anathema. And if it be said that I am an unworthy Vicar of the blessed Apostle Peter, yet what can be said against my holy predecessors Agapetus and Silverius, who condemned Anthimus?'

Vigilius accused of homicide.

The anger of Theodora against her rebellious accomplice was quickened, and apparently justified, by the accusations which reached Constantinople, preferred by the Roman commonalty against their haughty and passionate Pope. It was not only the old charge of procuring the deposition and conniving at the death of Silverius that was now brought up against him. Other strange charges were made, which at least seem to indicate the violent temper of the aristocratic Pontiff. 'We submit to your Piety,' said the Roman messengers, 'that Vigilius is a homicide. He was seized with such fury that he gave a blow on the face to his notary, who shortly after fell at his feet and expired[2]. Also upon some offence committed by a

[1] In Anastasius Bibliothecarius.

[2] 'Sic est in furorem versus ut daret alapam notario suo, qui mox ad pedes ejus cadens expiravit' (Anast. Bibl. p. 131, apud Muratori). Perhaps the indignity thus publicly inflicted on a proud Roman nobleman may have caused some apoplectic seizure which resulted in his death.

widow's son he caused him to be arrested at night by his nephew Vigilius, son of the Consul Asterius, and beaten with rods till he died[1].' BOOK V. CH. 23.

'On the receipt of these tidings,' says the Papal biographer, 'the Augusta [Theodora] sent Anthemius the Scribe to Rome with her orders and with a special commission[2], saying, "Only if he is in the Basilica of St. Peter refrain from arresting him. For if you shall find Vigilius in the Lateran or in the Palace [adjoining it], or in any church, at once put him on ship-board and bring him hither to us. If you do not do this, by Him who liveth for ever I will have you flayed alive[3]." Then Anthemius the Scribe, coming to Rome, found him in the church of St. Cecilia on the 10th of the Kalends of December [22 November, 545]. . . . It was then his birthday, and he was distributing presents to the people: but Anthemius, arresting him, took him down to the Tiber and placed him on board ship. The common people followed him, begging in a loud voice that they might receive his prayers. When he had uttered his prayers all the people answered Amen, and the ship moved off. But when the Romans saw that the ship which bore Vigilius was really on her way, then they began to throw sticks, stones, and potsherds, and to shout, "Hunger go with thee: mortality be with thee. Thou hast wrought evil for the Romans: mayest thou find evil wherever thou goest." Nevertheless, some men who loved him followed him forth from the church.'

545. Anthemius sent to Rome to arrest Vigilius.

[1] Or it may have been Vigilius's own nephew who was thus beaten to death. The text seems to be here hopelessly corrupt.

[2] 'Et cum virtute majore.'

[3] 'Nam si non feceris, per viventem in saecula excoriari te faciam.'

BOOK V. CH. 28.

Doubtful character of this story.

In this picture of a haughty and unpopular Pope, crouched to by the mob so long as he is still on shore, and the receiver of their missiles and their taunts as soon as his ship is under way, there is something which looks like the handiwork of a contemporary. Yet it is not very easy to fit in the details here given with what we know of the life of Vigilius. He was certainly not taken straight to Constantinople and at once exposed to the wrath of Theodora. On the contrary, he seems to have spent the following year in Sicily [1], not in close custody, but an honoured and important guest. From thence, as we have already seen, in the early part of 546 he despatched a number of corn-ships to Rome, a charitable return for the muttered execrations of the crowd (which perhaps had not reached the ears of his Holiness)—'May hunger go with thee and death overtake thee.'

Residence in Sicily.

547. He sails for Constantinople.

This mysterious residence of a year in Sicily was ended by an invitation, not from Theodora, but from Justinian, in obedience to which Vigilius sailed for Constantinople, arriving at that city on the 25th January, 547. The petition previously urged by Theodora for the recognition of Anthimus seems now to have been tacitly dropped. The whole efforts, both of the Imperial pair and of all who were like-minded with them in the East, were now devoted to procuring the Pope's assent to the condemnation of 'the Three Chapters.'

Controversy of the Three Chapters.

The theological controversy which is labelled by this strangely-chosen name is one of the paltriest and least edifying that even the creed-spinners of the Eastern

[1] Perhaps not the whole of that year. Agnellus (§ 70) says that Vigilius consecrated Maximian Bishop of Ravenna, *at Patras in Achaia*, on the 14th October, 546.

Church ever originated. Gladly would a modern historian leave it undisturbed in the dust which, for a thousand years and more, has gathered over it. But this cannot be. Even as Monophysitism, by loosening the hold of the Empire on Syria and Egypt, prepared the path of the Companions of Mohammed, so the schism of the Three Chapters loosened the hold of the Empire on recovered Italy, and made smooth the path of the invading Lombards. As the student of the Thirty Years' War in Germany must compel himself to listen to the disputes between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches; as the student of the history of Holland must have patience with the squabbles of Calvinists and Remonstrants; as the student of our own Civil War must for the time look upon Prelacy and Presbytery as opposing principles for whose victory or defeat the universe stands expectant; so must we, at any rate for a few pages, watch narrowly the theological sword-play between Emperor and Pope beside the graves of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, and Ibas.

BOOK V. CH. 23.

547.

Its political importance.

In the whispered conversations of Arsaces and Artabanes[1] we caught a glimpse of the Emperor as he appeared at this time to his subjects, a grey-bearded theologian, sitting in the library of his palace till far on into the night, conversing with monks and bishops, and endlessly turning over with them the rolls of the Christian Scriptures or the Fathers' comments upon them. In these theological conferences Justinian discovered, or was taught to recognise, three defects in the proceedings of the venerated Council of Chalcedon[2].

Justinian's passion for Theology.

Points omitted by the Council of Chalcedon, 451.

[1] See p. 557.

[2] A professed ecclesiastical historian would here have to notice

BOOK V. CH. 28.

1. Writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia.

1. Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, was the teacher of Nestorius, and one of the strongest maintainers of the doctrine that the divine Logos, distinct from the human personality of Christ, dwelt therein as Jehovah dwelt in his temple at Jerusalem. This doctrine had been emphatically condemned at the successive Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451): but Theodore himself, whose death happened three years before the former Council, had been allowed to sleep quietly in his tomb and had hitherto escaped anathema. This omission Justinian now proposed to remedy. Theodore had been dead for more than a century, but his name must now be struck out of the diptychs, and his person and writings visited with the unsparing anathema of the Church.

2. Certain writings of Theodoret of Cyrus.

2. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria (with whom we have already made some acquaintance as an ecclesiastical historian[1]), was a friend and fellow-pupil of Nestorius, and therefore in the charitable judgment of the orthodox could easily be accused of sharing his heresy. Modern enquirers, however, incline to the conclusion that he was no Nestorian, but a man, clearer-sighted than some of his contemporaries, who began, earlier than they, the contest against the arrogant Monophysitism of the Alexandrian Church. However in this contest he had published treatises sharply attacking both Cyril, who was accounted

the controversy as to the condemnation of Origen, out of which, by a kind of reaction, the debate as to the Three Chapters is said to have arisen. But besides that this would lead me too far from my main subject, I doubt whether the connexion of the two controversies as cause and effect was so close as was represented by the defenders of the Three Chapters.

[1] See vol. i. pp. 280, 531, 728 n.

orthodox, and the Council of Ephesus, to whose authority the whole Church bowed. Justinian did not seek for an anathema on the person of Theodoret, who after years of excommunication had been replaced in his bishopric by the Council of Chalcedon; but he claimed that these special writings against Cyril and against the Third Council should be branded as heretical, a claim which was legitimate according to the ecclesiastical ideas of the day, but which opened an endless vista of future disputation if there was to be practically no 'Statute of Limitations' in theological controversy.

3. The letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris.

3. Ibas of Edessa was, like the two last-named prelates, a Syrian bishop, and belonged to the school of Theodore of Mopsuestia. He, like Theodoret, had been deposed from his see during the short interval between the Third and Fourth Councils in which the Monophysites virtually reigned supreme in the Church; and like Theodoret, he had been reinstated by the Council of Chalcedon. The chief offence now alleged against him was a letter written by him to a certain Maris, Bishop of Hardaschir in Persia, in which he described the acts of the Council of Ephesus in a tone of violent hostility and denounced Cyril as a heretic. Although Ibas himself, even at this period of his life, does not seem to have fully accepted the teaching of Nestorius, and afterwards at the Council of Chalcedon joined in the anathema against that theologian, there can be no doubt that some of the expressions used in this letter wore a Nestorian colour, and that if Cyril was to be venerated as a saint, it was hard to defend the orthodoxy of Ibas. What rendered the affair peculiarly difficult, and should have made Justinian

431–451.

peculiarly unwilling to disinter it from the oblivion in which it was entombed, was that the Council of Chalcedon itself, the venerable Fourth Synod, had listened to the reading of this semi-Nestorian epistle and allowed it to be entered upon its minutes without manifesting its disapproval; nay, that the Papal Legates had expressly declared, 'after the reading of this letter we pronounce Ibas orthodox, and give judgment that he be restored to his see.'

Justinian's reason for raising these questions.

These, then, were the three points in which the lawyer-like intellect of Justinian had detected imperfection in the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon, and in which he considered that a tacit reversal of the action of that Council might be made, in order to conciliate the prejudices of the Monophysites. The object which he had in view, and which was that which Zeno and Anastasius had sought to obtain, was a desirable one. The deep and increasing alienation of the Monophysites of Egypt and Syria was, in the existing condition of the Church's relations to the State, a real danger to the Empire, a danger the full extent of which was manifested in the following century, when the hosts of Omar and Amru invaded those two provinces. But the expedient devised by Justinian, though not devoid of cleverness, was too small and subtle to succeed. The stern Monophysites of Alexandria were not to be drawn back into union with Constantinople by the excitement of hunting three heretics who had been dead for a century. And, on the other hand, Italy, Africa, and Gaul felt that when the Sacred Council of Chalcedon was touched the Ark of God was in danger. By whatever external professions of respect the insult might be veiled, the new

ecclesiastical legislation was an insult to the authority of Chalcedon and was resented accordingly. BOOK V. CH. 23.

The attempt to procure the condemnation of the persons or the writings of these three Syrian theologians occupied the best energies of Justinian during ten years of his reign, and perhaps somewhat consoled him for the loss of the Monophysite partner of his throne, who died when he was but half-way through the battle. It was probably towards the end of 543, or early in 544, that 'Imperator Caesar Philochristus, JUSTINIANUS, Alamannicus, Gotthicus, Francicus, Germanicus, Anticus, Alanicus, Vandalicus, Africanus, the pious, the fortunate, the renowned, the victorious, the triumphant, the ever-venerable, the august,' issued in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost his edict to the whole body of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. This edict is lost, but from a second edict which was published about eight years later, and which was probably a somewhat expanded edition of the first, we may form a conjecture as to its contents. This latter edict (which with its Latin translation fills fifty large octavo pages [1]) begins by an elaborate statement of Christian doctrine according to the Creed of Nicaea. In ten short sections or 'chapters,' the errors of the Arians, the Apollinarians, the Eutychians, and the Nestorians are stamped with the Imperial anathema. Then come the celebrated Three Chapters [2], of which

543-553.

543-544. First edict against the Three Chapters.

Second edict, about 551.

[1] In Migne's Patrologia, vol. lxix.

[2] Hefele (Conciliengeschichte, § 258) points out that, according to the original and proper usage, the Three Chapters (κεφάλαια) were the sentences condemning the three heretics, and therefore a supporter of the Three Chapters was a supporter of the Imperial decree. But by a very early perversion of language the word Chapters was applied to the opinions upon which anathema was

for the next century the world was to hear more than enough. In the eleventh chapter, Theodore of Mopsuestia, his person, his writings, his defenders are all anathematised. In the twelfth the same stigma is affixed to the writings of Theodoret on behalf of Nestorius and against Cyril and the Council of Ephesus. In the thirteenth, every one who defends the impious epistle of Ibas to the Persian heretic Maris, every one who says that that epistle or any part of it is sound, every one who refuses to anathematise it, is himself declared to be anathema. Then follows a long argument vainly endeavouring to prove that this 'impious epistle' met with no approval at the Council of Chalcedon. The question whether it be right to anathematise Theodore after his death is discussed, and decided in the affirmative on the authority of St. Augustine, and also on the ground that if the Church might not condemn heretics after their death, neither might she liberate after death those who, like St. Chrysostom, have passed away loaded with an unjust anathema. At length the Imperial theologian concludes with an appeal for reunion to the Monophysite sectaries: 'If therefore, after this true confession of faith and condemnation of the heretics, any one shall separate himself from the holy Church of God for the sake of words and syllables and quibbles about phrases, as if religion consisted in names and modes of speech and not in deeds, such an one will have to answer for his love of schism, and for those who have been or shall be hereafter deceived by him, to the great God

pronounced, and thus while Justinian and the Fifth Council are spoken of as condemners of the Three Chapters, the Bishops of the West were for the most part their maintainers.

and our Saviour Jesus Christ in the Day of Judgment. Amen.'

Justinian speaks as an ecclesiastical legislator.

Throughout the whole of this long edict is heard a tone of calm superiority which reveals the presence of the ecclesiastical legislator who deems that he is settling once and for ever the controversies that have distracted the Church. It does not need the repetition of the titles of Justinian to assure us that we are listening to the same mouth which gave forth the Codex and the Institutiones. But beside this, we may perhaps discern a spirit of rivalry with Pope Leo and an endeavour to imitate the style of the majestic Tome which had been accepted by all Christendom as the true definition of the faith with regard to the union of the two natures in Christ. If it was the hope of the Emperor that he might go down to posterity as the successful competitor of that great Pontiff, he has been signally disappointed. True, he did with infinite labour and difficulty persuade a General Council to ratify his censures against the three Syrians, but the prevalent feeling even of his own age was probably that he was meddling with matters beyond his range, as it must have been the earnest desire of his successors that he would have left the Three Chapters in oblivion.

Qualified acceptance of the edict.

The edict thus prepared in the Imperial cabinet was laid before the Patriarchs of the East. Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria all at length signed, some after much hesitation, and the first only on condition that if Rome did not agree his assent should be accounted as withdrawn. Once having signed, however, they were led by an instinct of self-preservation to compel their suffragan bishops to the same course, and thus it came to pass that before long, probably

BOOK V. CH. 28.

before the end of 544, all the dioceses of the East had condemned the Three Chapters. Not so, however, in the West. Everywhere, in Gaul, in Illyricum, in Italy, but pre-eminently in the province which had Carthage for its capital, a spirit of jealous alarm for the honour of the Fourth Council was aroused by the Imperial edict. Datius[1] of Milan (the prelate whom we have seen[2] actively promoting the restoration of his province to the obedience of Justinian) stoutly refused in Constantinople itself to append his signature to the edict, and returned to the West in order to arouse in the Pope the same spirit of opposition. The forced departure of Vigilius himself from Rome was perhaps really owing to this controversy; and according to one well-informed writer[3], the populace of Rome, instead of shouting out 'Hunger and mortality go with thee!' really exclaimed, 'Do not condemn the Three Chapters!'; and the Bishops of Africa, Sardinia, and Illyricum accosted him on his journey with a similar request. However this may be, it is evident that the increasing opposition of the Western Bishops to the Imperial theology made Justinian even more anxious to have the successor of St. Peter close to his own residence and amenable to his own powers of persuasion or terror. Vigilius received an imperative summons to Constantinople, set sail from Sicily, and arrived at the capital on the 25th of January, 547.

Vigilius summoned to Constantinople.

[1] The name of this prelate is generally spelt with a *c* (Dacius) by the ecclesiastical writers. In *Liber contra Mocianum*, however, as printed by Migne (lxvii. 862–3), Facundus spells the name with a *t*. I adhere to the form which, following Procopius, I have already adopted.

[2] p. 241.

[3] Facundus, Pro Def. Tr. Cap. iv. 3 (p. 624).

The Pope was received in that city, which he already knew so well, with every outward demonstration of respect. His first acts, however, seemed to show that the shouts of the Roman populace, 'Condemn not the Three Chapters!' were still ringing in his ears. He condemned Mennas, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and all the other Bishops who had subscribed the Edict, to exclusion for four months from the Communion of the Church: and this ecclesiastical courtesy was repaid by Mennas with a sentence of precisely the same length upon the Bishop of Old Rome. According to Pope Gregory the Great, Vigilius at this time also laid his anathema on the Empress Theodora.

547. His reception there.

Excommunications exchanged between Vigilius and Mennas.

This mood of stern antagonism to the Court did not last for many months. Justinian seems to have tried both flattery and menaces to shake the decision of the Pontiff: and if the menaces of imprisonment and hardship elicited only the spirited reply, 'You may keep me in captivity, but the blessed Apostle Peter will never be your captive,' on the other hand the invitations to the Imperial Palace, the visits from great personages in the state, the entreaties that he would not disturb the harmony of anathema which existed everywhere but where his power prevailed, were more successful. Vigilius renewed friendly relations with the Patriarch Mennas. He summoned the Western Bishops who were in Constantinople to a series of conferences, in which he discussed with them the possibility of gratifying the wishes of the Emperor. At length, on the 11th of April 548, he published to the world the solemn *Judicatum*, in which, summing up as judge the result of these episcopal conferences, he declared that, acting in obedience to the Apostolic

Vigilius is won over by the Court.

548. The *Judicatum* of Vigilius condemning the Three Chapters.

BOOK V. CH. 23.

command, 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good,' he had examined the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and finding many things in them contrary to the faith, he anathematised him and all his defenders. Similarly did he anathematise those writings of Theodoret in which he attacked the propositions of St. Cyril. Also the impious epistle said to have been written by Ibas to Maris the Persian. But in all this, as Vigilius with fourfold emphasis asserted, no disrespect was intended to the Council of Chalcedon, and anathema was pronounced on any one who should seek to impair its eternal and unshaken authority [1].

Mutiny of the Western Ecclesiastics.

This saving clause was not sufficient to induce the Bishops of the West to acquiesce in the Judicatum. All men who were undazzled by the splendour and unterrified by the frowns of the Court could see that the new anathemas did deal a heavy blow at the authority and reputation of the Fourth Council. Even in Constantinople itself Datius of Milan, hitherto the trusty ally of the Pope, expressed his profound dissatisfaction with the Judicatum. It is true that Rusticus, a deacon and nephew of Vigilius, who was tarrying with his uncle at the capital, at first expressed unbounded enthusiasm on behalf of the Judicatum, busied himself in transmitting copies of it through the Empire, and declared that not only ought the name of Theodore of Mopsuestia to be anathematised, but his very bones dug up and cast out of holy ground. So too a young and restless ecclesiastic named Sebastian

Datius.

Rusticus.

Sebastian.

[1] The Judicatum itself is no longer extant, but five fragments of it contained in other documents are collected by Hefele (ii. 821–4). It was sometimes called a *Constitutum*: see Facundus, ap. Migne, p. 863, note *a*.

(also a deacon of the Roman Church), at first hailed the Judicatum as a direct message from Heaven. Soon, however, they were carried away with the tide of Western feeling, everywhere ebbing away from Vigilius and his new friends. They sent letters to Sicily, to Italy, to Africa, declaring that the Pope had betrayed the Council of Chalcedon; letters which, coming from Roman deacons and men of his immediate retinue, did infinite harm to the Papal cause. Vigilius, either in petulance or in self-defence, retaliated by deposing them and six of their 'fellow-conspirators' from their various offices in the Church.

549.

Facundus.

These repressive measures could not silence the voice of real alarm and indignation in the Western Churches. Facundus, the African Bishop to whom we owe the fullest account of this tedious controversy, had been present at Constantinople through all the conferences which led up to the Judicatum, and had done his utmost to prevent its being issued. Returning now to his native province he gave such an account of the recent proceedings of the Pope that the Bishops assembled in Council resorted to the extreme measure of formally excommunicating the occupant of the Chair of St. Peter.

550. The African Bishops excommunicate Vigilius.

Vigilius begins to retreat from the Judicatum,

Vigilius saw that he had strained the allegiance of his Western suffragans too far, and with hesitation and awkwardness began to retreat. He asked Justinian's permission to withdraw the Judicatum, and the Emperor, who began to perceive that he and the Pope alone could not carry the whole Church with them, consented. It was decided that a General Council should be convened, and in order that the matter should be left open for that Council's decision,

which is withdrawn.

BOOK V. CH. 23.

15 August, 550.

Secret oath of the Pope to the Emperor.

the Pope's Judicatum was to be considered as withdrawn. In private, however, the Pope had to swear to the Emperor that he would do his utmost to secure the condemnation of the Three Chapters, would enter into no secret compact with their defenders, and would disclose to the Emperor the name of any one who should seek to draw him into any plots on behalf of the Chapters or against the State. Justinian on his part swore that he would keep this engagement secret, and would not visit with the penalty of death the persons whom Vigilius under his compact might be compelled to denounce.

A General Council convened,

The proposed Council now occupied the minds of all the great dignitaries of Church and State at Constantinople. But as the months passed over, it became more and more clear that the Council would not heal the schism which Justinian had with so light a heart created. He was using his power with a heavy hand against his theological opponents, extruding Bishops from their sees, especially in Africa, with a harshness which would have seemed more to befit an Arian Vandal than an Orthodox Emperor: but neither from Africa nor Illyria, from Italy nor Gaul would the Bishops come to do his bidding in Council by condemning the Three Chapters. The Eastern Bishops, more subservient and less fanatically Chalcedonian, were willing to do all that the Emperor required of them. Now then, if Vigilius was to fulfil his oath to the Emperor, he must take his place at the head of these Eastern Bishops, and formally anathematise the Chapters which his own clergy and well-nigh all the Bishops of the West were passionately defending.

but the Western Bishops will not attend it.

The situation was a cruel one, and might well make

Vigilius curse the day when he began to intrigue for the Chair of St. Peter. As if to complicate matters still further, the Emperor, without waiting for the assembling of the Council, put forth a second edict containing his authoritative definition of the essentials of the Christian faith, and anathematising the Three Chapters [1]. An assembly of all the Eastern and Western prelates who were at that time to be found in Constantinople was convened in the palace of Placidia [2], where the Pope was then dwelling. The professional jealousy of all the Bishops seems to have been aroused, and not even Theodore Bishop of Caesarea, the Emperor's chief adviser and right hand in all that concerned the condemnation of the Chapters, durst oppose the unanimous voice of the assembly, expressed by Datius of Milan and Vigilius of Rome, that an ecclesiastic who should celebrate mass in any of the churches where the Emperor's edict was publicly exhibited was a traitor to the brotherhood of the Church [3].

The Emperor's second edict 551 (?).

Hostile assembly of Bishops in the Pope's palace.

Notwithstanding this solemn prohibition, Theodore before many days were over solemnly celebrated mass in one of the contaminated churches, and prevailed upon Zoilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who had been hitherto considered somewhat of a Papal partisan, to be present likewise. Indignant at this open act of disobedience to the successor of St. Peter, Vigilius, with the concurrence of Datius and twelve other

Mennas and Theodore of Caesarea degraded and excommunicated by the Pope.

[1] This is the edict which I have quoted above (p. 585) to illustrate the first edict, now lost, of which it was probably an expansion.

[2] Doubtless the daughter of Arcadius, not her aunt, the daughter of Theodosius I.

[3] Fragmentum Damnationis Theodori (apud Migne, lxix. 61).

BOOK V. CH. 28.

14 August, 551.

Western Bishops, chiefly from Italian cities, published a solemn sentence of degradation from every ecclesiastical function against Theodore of Caesarea; and, waxing bolder at the sound of their own voices, included in it also Mennas, Patriarch of Constantinople.

Vigilius and Datius obliged to take refuge in the churches.

This daring blow, struck under the very eyes of the Emperor against his chief religious adviser and the ecclesiastical head of his own city, so exasperated Justinian that Vigilius and Datius found it necessary to fly for their lives to the asylum of the great basilicas. Vigilius chose for his place of refuge the Basilica of St. Peter, rightly judging that the sanctity of that place would be more efficacious than any other for the successor of the Apostle. Justinian however, who seems to have been in a state of frenzy at the insults offered to his vanity as a theologian and to his power as an Emperor, sent the Praetor to arrest him in the Basilica itself. This Praetor, the head of the City police, 'to whom,' as the adherents of Vigilius indignantly asserted, 'thieves and murderers rightly belonged,' came with a large number of soldiers bearing naked swords and bows ready strung in their hands. When he beheld them Vigilius fled to the altar [1], and clung to the columns on which it was supported. The deacons and other ecclesiastics who surrounded the Pope were first dragged away by the hair of their heads, and then the soldiers seized Vigilius himself, some by the legs, some by the hair, and some by the

Attempt of the Praetor Urbanus to arrest Vigilius in the church.

[1] Theophanes says 'the altar of Sergius which was in the monastery of Hormisdas.' The other accounts are very clear as to this event occurring in the basilica of St. Peter, but this basilica, according to the words of Vigilius, was 'in Ormisda fundatam.'

beard, and endeavoured to pull him from the altar. Still, however, with convulsive grasp the Pope clung to the pillars, and still the soldiers strove to drag his tall and portly form away from the place of refuge. In the scuffle the pillars of the altar were broken, and the altar itself was only prevented by the interposed hands of the ecclesiastics from falling on the Pope's head and ending his Pontificate and his sorrows at one blow [1].

[1] This curious scene is very circumstantially described by three of our authorities:—

1. By Vigilius himself in his Encyclica (p. 55, ed. Migne): 'Nam cum ad beati Petri basilicam in Ormisda fundatam Augusto mense nuper praeterito fugissemus, nullum latere confidimus, quia cum in eadem ecclesia a comitatu praetoris cum multitudine armatorum militum veniente, tanquam ad bellum instructa acie, a sancto ejus altari tracti pedibus traheremur, tenuimus: et super nos etiam ipsa altaris mensa ceciderat, nisi clericorum nostrorum fuisset manibus sustentata.'

2. By the Italian ecclesiastics tarrying at Constantinople in their letter to the Frankish ambassadors (p. 117, ed. Migne): 'Et tamen beatissimus papa Vigilius nec in basilica Beati Petri sedes tutas habere meruit: in tantum ut illic praetor, ad quem fures et homicidae tantummodo pertinent, mitteretur. Qui cum multitudine militum, spathas nudatas et arcus tensos portantium, supra dictam basilicam introivit. Quo viso, sanctus papa columnas altaris amplexus est: sed ille ferocitate et animo concitatus, primo de altari diaconos ejus et clericos a capillis tentos ejecit, postea vero ipsum sanctum papam alii a pedibus, alii a capillis et barba tentum crudeliter abstrahebant. Sed cum ille altaris columnas non dimitteret, cecidit altare, et columnae aliquae fractae sunt, et quantum ab ipso, ibi super ipsum altare in partibus mitti habuit.'

3. By Theophanes (eighth century): *Ὁ δὲ φοβηθεὶς τὴν ὀργὴν τοῦ βασιλέως τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ Σεργίου τοῦ μάρτυρος μονῆς τοῦ Ὁρμίσδου προσέφυγεν. Κᾀκεῖθεν ἑλκόμενος κατέσχεν τοὺς βαστάζοντας τὸ θυσιαστήριον κίονας, καὶ τούτους κατέστρεψεν βαρὺς ὢν καὶ μέγας τῷ σώματι.*

The Liber Pontificalis, strangely enough, makes no mention

BOOK V. CH. 23. 551.

The sight of a chief of police and his satellites grasping the successor of St. Peter by the legs and trying to drag him forth from the shelter of St. Peter's own basilica was too much for the religious feelings of the people of Constantinople. Loud and menacing murmurs arose from the spectators who had crowded into the church. Even some of the soldiers audibly expressed their disapproval of the work upon which they were engaged: and soon the Praetor with his retinue vanished from the sacred building, leaving Vigilius still under its safeguard.

Belisarius and other Senators sent to expostulate

The Emperor now tried another method. A deputation of the most important personages of the Empire was sent to argue calmly with Vigilius and persuade

here of the Three Chapters, but seems to consider that the quarrel between Vigilius and the Emperor was concerning the recognition of the former Patriarch, Anthimus. It represents the Pope, under the pressure of Justinian's menaces, as saying: 'So far as I can see, it is not Justinian and Theodora, those two most pious sovereigns, but Diocletian and Eleutheria who have summoned me hither and whom I find upon the throne. Do with me what you will: I receive the just reward of my deeds.' Then one of the bystanders gave him a slap on the face, saying, 'Homicide, do you know to whom you are speaking? Have you forgotten that you slew Silverius the Pope and caused the son of a widow woman to be cudgelled to death?' ('et filium mulieris viduae ad calces (?) et fustes interfecisti'). The biographer then tells the story of the flight to St. Euphemia's Church and the fracture of the altar-column, which he transfers thither from St. Peter's: and continues, 'And Theodora Augusta [who died three years previous to these events] caused a rope to be put round his neck and so had him dragged through the whole of the city till even-tide. Then he was put in prison and fed on a scanty pittance of bread and water. The Roman clergy who were with him were sent into exile in various places, and put to labour in the mines.' I doubt whether it is worth while attempting to fit in such loose and inaccurate gossip as this, into authentic history.

with the Pope.

him to abandon an attitude of needless hostility and distrust. The persons who composed this deputation are all of them interesting to us for other reasons. First and foremost was Belisarius (now probably in the forty-sixth year of his age), the instrument by whom Vigilius had been raised to the Papacy. With him came his fellow-patrician Cethegus, the exile from Rome, formerly Princeps of the Roman Senate, a man once accused of treachery to the Emperor[1], but now apparently restored to full Imperial favour. The other envoys were Justin the son of the lately-deceased Germanus, who had been Consul eleven years previously, and who now held the high office of Master of the Household[2]; Peter, once the bold ambassador to Theodahad[3], now Patrician and Master of the Offices; and Marcellinus the Quaestor, apparently the same literary courtier of Justinian who under the title of Marcellinus Comes has, by his useful Chronicle, filled so many gaps in our knowledge of the history of the fifth and sixth centuries. This deputation was instructed to invite the Pope to come forth from his asylum on receiving a solemn oath for his personal safety, and to inform him that, if he would not accept these terms, measures should again be taken for his forcible removal. After some little bargaining as to the forms of the oath, Vigilius consented to these conditions. The memorandum containing the terms of agreement was laid upon a cross containing a fragment of the true wood of the Cross of Calvary, above the

Oaths having been given for his safety, Vigilius returns to his palace.

[1] See p. 464.

[2] *Cura Palatii.* The mention of his ex-consulship shows that we have here to do with the son of Germanus, not with the successor of Justinian.

[3] See pp. 20 and 306.

BOOK V. CH. 23. 551. keys of St. Peter, and upon the iron grating which fenced in the altar of the Apostle[1]. When all these arrangements had been made, to give greater efficacy to the compact the five noblemen took their 'corporal oath' for the safety of the Pontiff, and Vigilius, emerging from his hiding-place, returned to the palace of Placidia.

His second flight. Notwithstanding all this solemn swearing, the situation of the Pope after his return became daily more intolerable. His servants and the ecclesiastics who remained faithful to him were publicly insulted; every entrance to the palace was blocked by armed men; he had reason to think that a violent attack was about to be made upon his person. After making a vain appeal to the Imperial envoys whose plighted oath was thus being violated, he quitted the palace again by night two days before Christmas-day. (23 Dec. 551.) The shouts of the men-at-arms penetrated even into his bed-chamber, and only this urgent terror, as he himself says, could have impelled him to the hardships and dangers of a nocturnal expedition[2]. He fled this

[1] 'Et dum saepe dicti judices, posito indiculo super altare, et cataracta beati Petri apostoli, et super crucem quae de ligno passionis Domini habet inclausum, sed et super claves beati Petri apostoli praestitissent corporale jusjurandum' (Encyclica, p. 55 Migne). The interpretation above given of 'cataracta' is taken from Ducange. Whether St. Peter's keys were relics or not does not seem clear.

[2] In allusion probably to his own portly person he appeals to the narrowness of the hole through which he escaped as a proof of the desperateness of his condition: 'Sicut locus ille poterit cunctis hominibus indicare' (p. 56). I do not quite understand the meaning of 'ut *per parvam maceriem fabricantium* transire compediti dolore nimio in nocturna obscuritate positi cogeremur.' Bower (ii. 392) says 'climbing . . . over a wall that was building,

time, not to his old asylum at St. Peter's, but across the Bosporus to Chalcedon. There, in the renowned sanctuary of St. Euphemia, in the very church where, just one century before, the great Council of the Six Hundred and Thirty Fathers had been held, the hunted Pope, the champion of that Council's authority, took refuge.

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551. He takes refuge at Chalcedon.

In such a place it would have been dangerous for the Emperor to repeat the scenes of violence which had profaned the basilica of St. Peter. After a month's interval he sent the same five noblemen who had composed the previous deputation, with an offer of new and perhaps more stringent oaths of protection if the Pope would again return to his palace. The answer of Vigilius was firm and dignified: 'For no private or pecuniary reason have I sought shelter in this church, but solely in order to avert the scandal to the Church which was being perpetrated before all the world. If the Emperor is determined to restore peace to the Church, as she enjoyed it in the days of his uncle and pious predecessor, I need no oaths, but come forth from my asylum at once. If this be not his intention, oaths are also needless, for I shall not leave the basilica of St. Euphemia.'

He refuses again to quit his asylum.

The Pope now proceeded, or threatened to proceed, to publish the excommunication of Theodore and Mennas, which had before been privately served upon them. On his part the Emperor sent by the hands of Peter the Referendarius[1] a letter which Vigilius

Letter of reproaches from the Emperor.

31 Jan. 552.

but was not yet raised to its due height:' but this does not seem to express the Pope's meaning.

[1] There were eighteen Referendarii under Justinian whose duty it was to put in proper form the petitions of his subjects and

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alleges to have been so full of insults and mis-statements, that he is certain it can never have been written by the Emperor. This, however, is of course only a figure of speech to enable him to criticise it without open disrespect. There can be no doubt that it was Justinian's own composition, and we can easily imagine its purport—an unsparing exposure of the past vacillations, intrigues, and broken promises of the Roman Pontiff.

The Pope issues his Encyclica, 5 Feb. 552.

To this document and to the Emperor's proposals for peace Vigilius replied by a long letter, the 'Encyclica,' containing his account of the controversies of the past year, and offering, upon receiving proper oaths for their safety, to send Datius of Milan and certain other of the ecclesiastics who shared his seclusion, to treat, with full powers from him, for the restoration of the peace of the Church. It is from this Encyclica that we derive the greater part of our information as to the embittered strife between Pope and Emperor.

The dispute between Pope and Emperor passes out of the acute phase.

That strife which for the past six months had assumed an acute type and had seemed likely to end in bloodshed, now relapsed into its tedious chronic condition. Death removed some of the combatants from the scene. Datius of Milan died in June; two months afterwards, Mennas of Constantinople. It was clear that Justinian had succeeded in tying a knot which only a Fifth General Council could untie, and to that Council, which at length on the 5th of May, 553, assembled in Constantinople, all eyes, at least the eyes of all Oriental Christians, were now directed.

Meeting of the Fifth General Council, 5 May, 553.

transmit his answers. Evidently this Peter is not the ex-consul and Master of the Offices, but a person of lower rank.

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The Western prelates still kept aloof. It was one thing to summon them to Constantinople, and another thing to induce them to visit a capital where the venerable Datius, and Vigilius successor of St. Peter, had been treated with such discourtesy and had encountered so much actual peril.

The Pope will not preside at the Council.

The Emperor naturally desired that the presidency of the Council should be vested in 'the Bishop of Old Rome;' and Eutychius the new Patriarch of Constantinople, a man apparently of gentler disposition than Mennas, voluntarily offered to concede the first place to Vigilius. The Pope, however, did not choose to preside in a Council composed almost entirely of Eastern Bishops. For the matter in debate he perhaps cared little, but he rightly dreaded again placing himself in opposition to the general voice of the Western Church. There were long negotiations between Pope and Emperor as to the composition of the Council. Vigilius proposed that four Easterns and four Westerns should meet and that their decision should be accepted as final. Justinian was willing to concede that four Bishops from each of the three Eastern Patriarchates should meet Vigilius and three of the Bishops in his obedience; but this the Pope would not accept. Thus the negotiations broke down: and in truth a small committee of the kind indicated by these proposals would have been a poor substitute for the great ecclesiastical Parliaments which had met at Nicaea and Chalcedon.

The Council without the Pope condemns the Three Chapters.

Eventually when the Council, consisting of one hundred and thirty-nine Bishops from the East and six from the West, met in the Metropolitan Church of Constantinople, the throne prepared for Vigilius was vacant. Some sittings were spent in fruitless

BOOK V. CH. 28. 553. endeavours to induce the Pope to join the assembled Prelates, Belisarius and Cethegus being again vainly sent by the Emperor on this errand: and then the Council, under the presidency of Eutychius, proceeded to its main business. There was little discussion, apparently no opposition. The Bishops had, probably, each already condemned the Three Chapters in their individual capacity, and now shouted 'Anathema to Theodore; long life to the Emperor,' with edifying unanimity.

14 May, 553. The Pope in his *Constitutum* defends the Three Chapters.

When Vigilius was invited to join the Council he replied with a demand for a delay of twenty days to enable him to prepare a written statement of his judgment on the Three Chapters. The Emperor answered, with some justice, that it was not his individual sentence, but his voice and vote at the Council that was required; but the Pope persisted in his project, and by the 14th of May had drawn up a document called the *Constitutum*, containing his own judgment and that of nineteen Bishops of the West and deacons of Rome concerning the matters in dispute. In this document, while examining at great length the writings and severely condemning the errors of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and while reiterating his own profession of faith, so as to show that he himself was utterly untainted with Nestorianism, Vigilius condemned all the proceedings of those who were now agitating for the condemnation of the Three Chapters; grounding his opposition chiefly on the familiar arguments of the impropriety of anathematising the dead, and the fact that, as far as Theodore and Ibas were concerned, the cause had been already decided in their favour at Chalcedon. He concluded

in the tone of an autocrat of the Church, forbidding any person who held any ecclesiastical dignity whatever to put forth any opinion concerning the Three Chapters contrary to this *Constitutum*, or to raise any further question concerning them. Any action which might be taken by such ecclesiastical persons in opposition to this decree was declared beforehand to be made null and void 'by the authority of the Apostolic See over which by the grace of God we preside.'

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Vigilius anathematised by the Council.

The members of the Fifth Council, at whom of course this *Constitutum* was chiefly aimed, went on their way disregarding it; and at their seventh and last sitting, after completing all their other anathemas, struck the name of Vigilius out of the diptychs. This was done at the express and urgent entreaty of Justinian. Thus had the nephew of Justin, the mainstay of that Imperial house whose great glory it had once been to bring about the reconciliation with the Roman See, himself imitated the audacious act of Acacius, by excommunicating the successor of St. Peter.

Vigilius banished to Proconnesus.

Sentence of banishment was passed on all the opposers of the Fifth Council, and in this banishment Vigilius, already in a certain sense an exile, had doubly to share. He was conveyed to the little island of Proconnesus, near the western end of the Sea of Marmora, closely guarded, and given to understand that so long as he refused to accept the authority of the Fifth Council, he had no hope of revisiting Rome. Not only so, but the Emperor appears to have determined to order a new election to the Papal Chair, superseding Vigilius by a more pliable pontiff, as Theodora had superseded Silverius by Vigilius.

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553. Vigilius surrenders.

8 Dec. 553. His letter of retractation addressed to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Under these hard blows, with the prospect of yet harder to come, and with his health undermined by that cruel disease[1] the agony of which has crushed the strongest hearts, the spirit of Vigilius gave way. After six months of banishment he wrote a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, in which he lamented the misunderstandings which, by the instigation of the Devil, had arisen between himself and his brother bishops dwelling in the Royal City. Christ, the true Light of the World, had now removed all darkness from the writer's mind and recalled the whole Church to peace. Following the noble example of St. Augustine, who feared not in his *Retractationes* to own the mistakes in his previous writings, Vigilius would now acknowledge that, having with renewed care examined the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, he found therein many things both blasphemous and absurd which he was now ready unhesitatingly to condemn. With equal clearness could he anathematise all that Theodoret had written against the true faith, against the Council of Ephesus, and the twelve chapters of Cyril. Lastly, he anathematised the letter, full of profane blasphemies, which Ibas was said to have written to the Persian heretic Maris. No point was left uncovered. The Pope had surrendered to his enemies at discretion.

23 Feb. 554. He issues a new *Constitutum* condemning the Three Chapters.

Two months later, Vigilius addressed, probably to the Bishops of the West, a long *Constitutum*, in which, going over all the weary controversy, he in fact retracted whatsoever he had previously advanced as to the impropriety of condemning the Three Chapters. The only novelty in the document, and a perilous

[1] Anastasius says, 'ex multa afflictione calculi dolorem habens.'

one, was a long piece of special pleading (which seems to have convinced no one either in its own or succeeding ages) on behalf of the proposition that the so-called letter of Ibas was never written by that ecclesiastic.

He is allowed to return to Italy.

After this complete capitulation the Pope was suffered to return to Italy. Great events had meanwhile been happening there, events which made his return at this time eminently opportune. The Roman clergy had petitioned for his restoration, to which step Justinian may perhaps have given somewhat of the character of an act of amnesty; though indeed the Emperor had so completely vanquished the Pope, that no reason for quarrel any longer existed between them.

He dies in Sicily, 7 Jan. 555.

But Vigilius was not after all to see again the Church of the Lateran, for the sake of the first place in which he had done so many misdeeds and endured so many hardships. His health, which had been failing ever since his flight to Chalcedon, and which had no doubt suffered from his banishment to Proconnesus, now became rapidly worse. He could proceed no further on his way than to Sicily, and died there on the 7th of January, 555. He was succeeded, after a vacancy of a little more than three months, by the deacon Pelagius, who had served under Vigilius at Constantinople through all the recent controversy, and had shared his hardships and his perils.

Results of the conflict.

As far as Emperor and Pope were concerned, thus closed the controversy of the Three Chapters. Justinian had undoubtedly gathered all the laurels that could reward such a petty and ignoble contest. He, the amateur theologian, after a struggle as long as the siege of Troy, had imposed his definition of the right

faith on all the four Christian patriarchates, and had bound those who believe in the infallibility of General Councils to accept it henceforward as an essential article of the Christian creed that the soul of Theodore of Mopsuestia suffers eternal torment. As a statesman his success was not perhaps equally brilliant. He did not by his manœuvres secure the loyalty of a single disaffected Monophysite; and he raised up a generation of bitter schismatics in Italy who were to persist for a century and a half, preferring even the rule of the savage Lombard to communion with the Church which anathematised the Three Chapters. As a guide and counsellor of the Church the half-heathen Constantine certainly presents a fairer record than the highly-trained controversialist Justinian.

Position of the Pope.

The unhappy Vigilius, in the course of this controversy, had to drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs. Deeply offending both parties, he has found champions in neither; and in consequence posterity has been perhaps unduly severe upon his memory. Travelling as he did at least four times from one point to the diametrically opposite point of the theological compass[1], he deeply injured the credit of the Roman See, which now passed through half a century of obscurity till the arising of the first and greatest Gregory. He must certainly be held to have been an unsuccessful general of the forces of the Papacy, but there is no proof that he was a coward, and his censors have perhaps hardly enough considered whether

[1] (1) Anathema against Mennas; (2) Judicatum against the Three Chapters; (3) Constitutum in their favour; (4) Constitutum in condemnation of them.

at his particular point in the campaign success was possible. For six years he had to dwell at the seat of the rival Patriarch, daily beholding the majesty of the Emperor and begirt by evidences of his power. To resist the commands of this omnipotent Caesar, from a modest dwelling within a mile or two of his palace, was a task which required much more hardihood than merely hurling spiritual thunderbolts from the Lateran or the Vatican at some unseen and unknown Frederick or Henry on the other side of the Alps.

Then the theological battle-field was ill-chosen for the interests of the Papacy. To say nothing of the dismal unreality of the controversy (though Vigilius was probably acute enough to perceive and to be disheartened by this unreality), there can be no doubt that the pedantic, lawyer-like mind of Justinian *had* detected a flaw in the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon. His determination to publish his discovery to an admiring world placed Vigilius in a pitiable dilemma, one from which even a Leo or a Hormisdas would have found a difficulty in escaping. If he defended the Three Chapters he was looked upon as tainted with Nestorianism and false to the Council of Ephesus. If he condemned them he seemed to be dallying with the Monophysites and disloyal to the Council of Chalcedon. Certainly to adopt both courses alternately, and to do this twice over, was about as disastrous a policy as he could possibly have adopted. But even as to this vacillation the harshness of our censure would be abated if we grasped fully the enormous difficulty of his position. He, like Justinian, was striving, and could not but strive, for an unattainable object. The Emperor was

compelled to struggle for the restoration of the old boundaries of the Roman Empire. The Pope was bound to wrestle for the preservation of the unity of the Christian Church. A decree against which they were powerless to contend had gone forth that the East and the West should be parted asunder, politically, religiously, and intellectually. But they knew not this; and the luckless Vigilius, labouring to prevent the Eastern and Western Churches from being rent asunder by this miserable question about the damnation of Theodore, was like a man who, standing on shipboard, reaches out his hand to a friend standing on the pier, and not unclasping it quickly enough, is swept from his place by the motion of the vessel and falls headlong into the sea.

But assuredly the wonderful political instinct of the Roman Church was at fault when she allied herself with Constantinople against Ravenna. Already have two Popes—Silvèrius and Vigilius—found the little finger of Justinian thicker than the loins of Theodoric.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NARSES AND TOTILA.

Authority.

Source:—

PROCOPIUS, Be Bello Gotthico, iv. 21–32 (pp. 569–627).

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551. Disgust of Justinian at the slow progress of his arms in Italy.

IMMERSED in theology and intent on the damnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Justinian would gladly have forgotten the affairs of Italy. Sixteen years ago he had sent his soldiers and his invincible General on an expedition which he perhaps hoped would prove, like the Vandal campaign, not much more than a military promenade. Victory had come far more slowly in Italy than in Africa, and in the very moment of his triumph the prize had slipped from his grasp and the whole work had to be done over again. Ever since Totila was raised upon the shields of the Goths, ill-success, scarcely varied by one or two streaks of good-fortune, had attended the Imperial arms, and now only four points on the coast —Ravenna, Ancona, Hydruntum, Crotona—owned allegiance to the Empire. As a source of revenue, the country for whose re-annexation such large sums had been expended was absolutely worthless; and on the other hand, whenever the Imperial Architect

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wished to erect a new church or fortress in Thrace or Asia Minor to commemorate his name and to be described with inflated rhetoric in the *De Aedificiis* of Procopius, the finance-minister, if he were an honest man, was sure to remind him of the long arrears of pay due to the starving troops in Italy, and of the absolute necessity that any money that could be spared should be remitted to Ravenna. Thus it came to pass that Justinian already in 549 was sick of the very name of Italy, and would have been willing to sit down satisfied with its loss, but that, as already stated, Vigilius and the other Roman refugees incessantly pressed upon him with their petitions for help, and their not unreasonable complaints of the ruin which his policy, if it was to stop short at this point, would have brought upon them.

Narses appointed General-in-chief.

There was, then, to be another expedition to Italy. Germanus being untimely dead and Liberius hopelessly incapable, the question arose who should be the new commander of the forces. John the nephew of Vitalian, who had passed the winter of 550 at Salona, had the military talent necessary for the post, but, notwithstanding his recently-formed connection with the Imperial house, he was still too little superior to the other generals by character or position to make it probable that they would accord to him that unquestioning obedience, the want of which had already
551. proved so fatal to the Emperor's interests. In these circumstances Justinian decided to offer the command of the new Italian expedition to his Grand Chamberlain Narses, who eagerly accepted it. The choice of this man, an eunuch, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, one whose life had been spent in the enervating

atmosphere and amid the idle labours of an Imperial presence-chamber, would have seemed the extremity of madness to the stout soldiers of the Republic by whom the title Imperator had first been worn. Yet, in truth, this choice proved to be another instance of Justinian's admirable knowledge of men, and great power (when he gave his intellect fair play) of adapting his means to the required ends. Narses (who lived for more than twenty years after the date we have now reached), though short in stature and lean in figure, evidently still possessed good health, and faculties quite undimmed by age. In his previous campaign in Italy, fourteen years before, he had shown no small strategic talent, and he had for ever secured the grateful affection of the stout soldier John, who would now willingly concede to him an obedience such as any other general would demand in vain. The two together, Narses as the wily much meditating brain, and John as the vigorous swiftly smiting arm, might be expected to do great deeds against even the gallant Totila. And throughout Italy, wherever the Roman armies might move, recovering cities or provinces for the Empire, the presence of a man who came straight from the Sacred Majesty of the Emperor, and had been for the past twenty years or more a Cabinet-minister (as we should say) of the highest rank, would command the unhesitating and eager obedience of all that official hierarchy whose instinct it was to obey, if it could only be assured that its orders came direct from Imperial Power.

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The announcement that the Eunuch was to command the Italian army was received with a shout of applause

His popularity.

BOOK V. CH. 24. 551. by all who hoped to share in the expedition. Narses, unlike many previous eunuchs at the Imperial Court, had always been conspicuous for his free-handed generosity. Many a barbarian soldier of fortune had already found himself opportunely enriched by the Grand Chamberlain's favour [1]. These longed to show their gratitude by the alacrity of their service; while to those who had not yet experienced his benefits the 'lively sense of favours to come' proved an equally powerful stimulus to action. With the zealous Catholics also throughout the Empire the appointment of Narses was in the highest degree popular, since his piety towards God and his devotion to the Virgin Mother were notorious throughout the Court, as they soon became notorious throughout the army. It was believed by his soldiers that the Illustrious *Cubicularius* had supernatural visitations from the Mother of God, and that she announced to him by some secret but well-known sign the favourable moment for his troops to move forward to battle [2]. Such a belief was, in the existing temper of men's minds, by itself a powerful aid to victory.

His piety.

His control of the Imperial purse.

Above all, Narses, as being one of the innermost governing council of the Empire, could ensure that his expedition should not be starved, as the second expedition of Belisarius had been starved, into failure. There was no talk now, as there had been then, of the General himself providing the sinews of war. The Imperial exchequer was now freely drawn upon. The long-standing arrears of the soldiers' pay were

[1] Procopius especially mentions the Heruli as thus won over to the Eunuch's party (p. 600).

[2] We get this detail from Evagrius: Eccles. Hist. iv. 24.

discharged. Liberal offers were made to all new-comers: and soon the usual motley host which called itself a Roman army was gathering round the Eunuch's standards, full of martial ardour for the fray, full of martial cupidity for the plunder of Italy.

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Narses hindered by a Hunnish invasion.

It was a satire on the policy of Justinian that Narses, eager to reach Salona on the Hadriatic coast and there assemble his army, was actually stopped at Philippopolis in Thrace[1] by a horde of Hunnish savages—probably the Kotrigur Huns whose raids have been already alluded to—who had penetrated into the Empire and were ravaging far and wide the Thracian villages. Fortunately, however, for the Italian expedition, the Hunnish torrent parted itself into two streams, one of which pursued its journey towards Constantinople, while the other moved south-westward to Thessalonica. Between the two hordes Narses adroitly made his way across Macedonia to Salona, where he spent the remainder of the year 551 in organising an army for the invasion of Italy.

Effect on Totila of the news of the appointment of Narses.

The news that this supreme effort was to be made for his overthrow quickened the energy of Totila, and at the same time increased his efforts to win the favour of the Roman people. While closely pressing both by sea and land the siege of Ancona, in order that the Imperialists might have no base of operations in all the long interval from Ravenna to Crotona, he also, as has been already said, brought back many of the captive Senators to Rome, and encouraged them to repair the desolations which he had himself caused, and which, we are told, were most conspicuous in the part of the City that lay on the west of the Tiber.

[1] About 300 miles from Constantinople.

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The King's care for the rebuilding of the City gained him some little favour from the Romans, who, in the estimation of Procopius, surpassed all other populations in love for their City and pride in its adornment[1]; but the Senators, paupers and still feeling themselves like captives, wandered ghost-like amid the scenes of their vanished splendour, and had neither the spirit nor the resources to assist, themselves, in the work of restoration.

Fleet sent to coast of Greece.

As we have seen in previous chapters, Totila had paid more attention to his fleet than any of the Ostrogothic Kings who preceded him, and was by no means disposed tamely to yield to Byzantium the dominion of the seas. Three hundred ships of war[2] were sent by him to cruise off the western coast of Greece, omitting no opportunity of plundering and distressing the subjects of the Empire. Their crews ravaged the island of Corcyra and the little islets near it, landed in Epirus, and laid waste the territory round the venerable fane of Dodona and Augustus's more modern City of Victory[3], and then, cruising along the coast, fell in with and captured some of the ships that were carrying provisions to the army of Narses at Salona.

Siege of Ancona by the Goths.

The siege of Ancona was, however, the chief operation in which Totila's forces were engaged: and that city, sore pressed both by sea and land, saw itself apparently on the eve of surrender to the Goths. Valerian, who seems to have been responsible for the government and defence of Ancona, was at this time staying

[1] Καίτοι ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πάντων ὧν ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν φιλοπόλιδες Ῥωμαῖοι τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες, περιστέλλειν τε τὰ πάτρια πάντα καὶ διασώζεσθαι ἐν σπουδῇ ἔχουσιν, ὅπως δὴ μηδὲν ἀφανίζηται Ῥώμῃ τοῦ παλαιοῦ κόσμου (p. 572).

[2] πλοῖα μακρά.

[3] Nicopolis, close to Actium.

at Ravenna, and finding himself unable to afford any effectual help with the forces which he had collected there, sent messengers to John at Salona with an earnest exhortation to avert the ruin to the Emperor's affairs which must result from the capture of so important a sea-port. John was convinced, and ventured, in defiance of the express orders which he had received from the Emperor, to despatch a squadron for the relief of Ancona. Valerian met him at Scardona[1] on the coast of Illyria, and concerted measures for the coming expedition, and soon the two generals, with fifty ships under their orders, crossed the Hadriatic and anchored off the little town of Sena Gallica (the modern Sinigaglia[2]), sixteen miles north-west of Ancona. On the other side the Goths had forty-seven ships of war, which they filled with some of their noblest soldiers and with which they sailed to meet the enemy, under the command of two admirals, Giblas and Indulph[3]. The latter officer was one who had once been a soldier in Belisarius's own body-guard, but, like so many of his comrades, disgusted by the Imperial ingratitude, had deserted to the standards of Totila. Scipuar, who had been joined in command with these two officers, remained with the rest of the army to prosecute the siege of Ancona by land.

Valerian persuades John to attempt to raise the siege.

Off Sinigaglia then the two fleets anchored, and both sides prepared for action. John and Valerian haranguing their troops insisted on the immense importance of raising the siege of Ancona and the hopelessness of their own position if they allowed the Goths

Preparations for sea-fight off Sinigaglia.

[1] On the Dalmatian coast, near Sebenico.

[2] The birth-place of the late Pope Pius IX.

[3] Also called Gundulph.

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on this day to obtain the command of the sea. Indulph and Giblas scoffed at the new audacity of the accursed Greeks who had at last ventured forth from the creeks and bays of Dalmatia in which they had so long been hiding. A feeble and unwarlike race, born to be defeated in battle, this sudden display of rashness on their part was the result of mere ignorance, but must be at once repressed by Gothic valour before it had time to grow to a dangerous height [1].

Victory of the Imperial fleet.

Notwithstanding these vaunting words, the Greeks, those children of the sea, who, from the days of Cadmus, had spread their sails to every breeze that ruffled the Aegean, vanquished the Goths, those hereditary landsmen, whose forefathers had roamed for centuries in the Sarmatian solitudes. The wind was light, and as ship grappled ship the battle assumed the appearance of a hand-to-hand encounter by land rather than a sea-fight. But the Goths, deficient in that instinctive sympathy between the sailor and his ship which belongs to a nation of mariners, failed to keep their vessels at proper distances from one another. Here a wide-yawning interval invited the inroad of the enemy; there several ships close together became a terror to their friends, and lost all power of manœuvring. The orders of the generals became inaudible in the hubbub of angry voices as each Gothic steers-

[1] In this speech, according to his usual custom, Procopius uses the name 'Greek' as a term of reproach applied by their enemies to the subjects of the Eastern Empire, who always call themselves Romans. His epithets, written down by one who was himself a *Graecus*, are very strong and show that he could subordinate his patriotism to his feeling of dramatic fitness: *Δείξατε τοίνυν αὐτοῖς ὅτι τάχιστα ὡς Γραικοί τε εἰσὶ καὶ ἄνανδροι φύσει καὶ ἡσσημένοι θρασύνονται* (p. 581).

man shouted to his fellow to leave him ampler sea-room. Intent on averting collision with their countrymen by poles and boat-hooks, the Goths were unable to attend to the necessities of the battle. Meanwhile the Imperial mariners, who had kept their ranks in perfect order, were perpetually charging into the gaps in the line of the barbarians, surrounding and cutting out the ships which were left defenceless, or keeping up a storm of missiles on those parts of the line where the hostile ships were thickly entangled with one another, and where the interlacing masts showed like net-work to the eye of a beholder[1]. The barbarians fell into the torpor of despair, and saw the chance of victory float away from them without making an effort to turn the tide. Then to torpor succeeded panic, and they steered their ships for headlong flight, flight which delivered them yet more utterly into the hands of the Romans. Indulph indeed with eleven of his ships succeeded in escaping from the scene of action; but, despairing of further resistance by sea, landed his men in the first harbourage and burned his ships to prevent their falling into the power of the enemy. All the other Gothic ships were either sunk or taken by the Romans, and Giblas himself was taken prisoner.

The siege of Ancona raised.

The Goths who had succeeded in escaping from the scene took the dismal tale of defeat to the army before Ancona, who at once raised the siege and retreated to the shelter of rock-built Osimo. John and Valerian then appeared upon the scene, occupied and perhaps plundered the recent Gothic camp, abundantly re-

[1] Εἴκασεν ἄν τις φορμηδὸν αὐτοῖς τὰ τῶν πλοίων ἰκρία ξυγκεῖσθαι (p. 582).

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victualled Ancona, and then returned to Salona and Ravenna respectively, having by this achievement struck a heavy blow at the power and yet more at the self-confidence of the Goths in Italy.

Loss of Sicily.

About the same time another disaster befell the Gothic cause. The respectable but feeble Liberius was removed from the government of Sicily, and Artabanes the Armenian was appointed in his stead. Avenger of Areobindus, governor of Carthage, Master of the Soldiery, aspirant to the hand of Justinian's niece, conspirator against Justinian's life [1], in all the varied phases of his career, whether loyal or disloyal, Artabanes had always shown courage and capacity; and he now abundantly justified the generous confidence reposed in him by the forgiving Emperor. He attacked the Gothic garrisons in Sicily with such vigour and blockaded so effectually those who would not meet him in the field that they were all speedily forced to surrender, and Sicily was lost to the Goths.

Ineffectual attempt of the Imperial forces on Sardinia.

John, the governor of Africa [2], endeavoured to rival the exploits of Artabanes by sending an expedition to subdue Corsica and Sardinia. These islands, on account of their long subjection to the Vandals, were looked upon as forming part of the African province and as naturally following its fortunes [3], but the result of the maritime supremacy of Totila during the last few years had been to annex them to the Ostrogothic kingdom. The armament which the Carthaginian governor now despatched to Sardinia commenced in

[1] See p. 557.

[2] Probably 'the brother of Pappus' and hero of the poem of Corippus. See p. 40, n. 2.

[3] Procopius calls them νήσους τὰς Λιβύῃ προσηκούσας (p. 590).

regular form the siege of Cagliari; but the Gothic garrison, which was a powerful one, sallied forth from the city and inflicted such a severe defeat on the besiegers that they fled headlong to their ships, and the reconquest of the two islands had to be for the time abandoned.

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Relations of the Goths and Franks.

Notwithstanding this slight gleam of success, the defeat at Sinigaglia, which left the Imperial fleet mistress of the sea, and the loss of Sicily, threw Totila and his nobles into a state of deep dejection. We learn at this point of the story that their hold upon the north of Italy had for some years been insecure, if it had not been altogether lost. The Franks of the Sixth Century, according to Procopius, adopted the ungenerous policy of always turning their neighbours' troubles to profitable account, by seizing their most precious possessions when they were engaged in a life and death struggle with some powerful enemy[1]. In pursuance of this policy Theudebert, grandson of Clovis, had descended into the valley of the Po (probably in the early years of Totila's heroic reign), and had annexed to his dominions, or at least had made subject to tribute, the three provinces of Liguria, Venetia, and the Cottian Alps, or, to speak in the language of modern geography, the whole of Piedmont and Lombardy[2]. The Goths, knowing that it was hopeless for them to contend at once against the Empire and the Franks, acquiesced for a time in this usurpation, and even made a kind of league of amity with Theudebert,

[1] Τὴν γὰρ ἀσχολίαν τῶν μαχομένων οἰκείαν οἱ Φράγγοι εὐκαιρίαν πεποιημένοι τοῖς ἐκείνων περιμαχήτοις αὐτοὶ ἀκινδύνως ἐπλούτουν (p. 586).

[2] Ticinum, Verona, and perhaps a few other fortresses, seem to have been retained by the Goths.

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551. the question of the precise apportionment of his Italian territory being by common consent adjourned till the war with the Empire should be ended.

Totila's overtures to the Emperor.

Gladly would Totila now have ended that war by some peaceful compromise. With Northern Italy in the power of the Franks, with Central and Southern Italy reduced well-nigh to a desert by seventeen years of war, he was prepared to relinquish all claim to the comparatively uninjured provinces of Sicily and Dalmatia, to pay a large tribute for the portion of Italy which was left to him, and to form a league of perpetual alliance with the Empire. It can hardly be doubted that for the Eastern Emperors themselves, from the mere Byzantine point of view, as well as for Italy and the world, such an arrangement would have been better than what was really in store for them if it was rejected,—the truceless enmity of the savage Lombard. But Justinian, even when most weary of his Italian enterprise, would listen to no proposals for abandoning *de jure* any one of his claims. He hated the very name of the Goths, and longed to extirpate them from the soil of the Empire. Thus all the many embassies of Totila, whatever the terms proposed, never returned with a message of peace.

Justinian's embassy to the Franks.

About this time, however, the Emperor himself had recourse to an embassy in order to detach the Franks from the Gothic alliance. King Theudebert was now
548. dead, having been accidentally killed while hunting wild bulls in a forest[1]; and to his son Theudebald, a feeble and sickly youth, Leontius the senator[2],

[1] So says Agathias, i. 4.

[2] The spy employed in the detection of the conspiracy of Arsaces (see p. 560).

ambassador of Justinian, addressed his remonstrances and his requests. And certainly the complaints of their former ally, addressed to the Franks of that day, seem to have had some foundation in truth. 'Justinian,' said the ambassador, 'would never have undertaken his enterprise against the Goths without the promise of your co-operation, for which he paid large sums of money. You refused your promised assistance and stood aside while we with vast labour and peril conquered the country, which you then most unjustly invaded, appropriating some of its provinces. We might blame, but we rather beseech you for your own sakes to depart out of Italy; for ill-gotten gains such as these will bring you no prosperity. You say that you are in alliance with the Goths: but the Goths have been your enemies from the beginning, and have waged against you one unceasing and unrelenting war. Just now, through fear, they condescend to be your flatterers, but if they once get clear of us, you will soon find out what is their feeling towards the Franks[1].' The ambassador concluded by exhorting Theudebald to undo what his father had done amiss, by firmly renewing the former alliance between the Franks and the Empire.

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Reply of the Frankish King.

Theudebald piteously replied that his father could not have been the clever robber of his neighbours' property whom the ambassadors described, since he himself was by no means wealthy. He thought the Emperor would have been rather pleased than otherwise to see his enemies the Goths despoiled of three important provinces, and he could truly say that if he

[1] This remarkable speech of Leontius is in the De Bello Gotthico, iv. 24 (pp. 587–9).

BOOK V. CH. 24. 551. could be proved to have taken anything *from the Empire* he would straightway restore it. He then commissioned a Frank named Leudard to return as his envoy with Leontius to Constantinople; but nothing seems to have resulted from the visit of the ambassador.

552. Crotona relieved. With these negotiations the winter of 551 wore away. Early in the spring of 552 occurred the relief of Crotona, so long the base of the Imperial operations in the south of Italy. Its garrison, hard pressed by the Goths, sent a message to Artabanes, the governor of Sicily, that unless speedily relieved they must surrender the city. Artabanes at the time was unable to help them, but Justinian himself, hearing of their distress, sent orders to the detachment which guarded the pass of Thermopylæ to set sail with all speed for Italy and raise the siege of Crotona. Strange to say, so great was their despatch and so favourable the breezes that they appeared in the bay before the arrival of the day fixed for the surrender of the city. The sight of the ships filled the besiegers with terror. They fled in all directions, eastwards to Tarentum, and southwards to the very edge of the Straits of Messina; and the Gothic governors of some of the other towns of Southern Italy, Tarentum itself and the 'lofty nest of Acherontia[1],' began to treat for the surrender of those places to the Imperial generals.

Composition of the host of Narses. Deep discouragement everywhere was creeping over the hearts of the defenders of the throne of Totila, and meanwhile the great and well-equipped host which Narses had been so long preparing at Salona was at

[1] Ragnaris was governor of Tarentum; Morras, who had once commanded in Urbino, of Acherontia.

last on its way. The sum total of the Imperial army does not seem to be given us by our historian, but we hear something of the multifarious elements of which it was composed. The two armies of John and of his father-in-law Germanus formed the nucleus of the host, but besides these there was the other John, nicknamed the Glutton, with a multitude of stout Roman soldiers. There was Asbad, a young Gepid of extraordinary bravery, with four hundred warriors, all men of his own blood. There was Aruth, a Herulian by birth but Roman by training, by inclination, and by marriage, who led a large band of his countrymen, men who especially delighted in the perils of the fight. Philemuth, also a Herulian, perhaps of purer barbaric training, who had served in many previous campaigns in Italy, was followed by more than three thousand men of the same wild and wandering race, all mounted on horseback. The young Dagisthaeus, probably also of barbarian origin, was released from the prison into which he had been thrown on account of his miserable mismanagement of the war waged with Persia in the defiles of Mount Caucasus[1], and was allowed to have another chance of vindicating his reputation as a general and his loyalty as a subject of the Emperor. In the same army was to be found a Persian prince himself, Kobad, nephew of Chosroës, grandson and namesake of the great King who had waged war with Anastasius. This prince, whom in his youth conspirators had sought to seat on the throne of the Sassanidae, had been condemned to death by his merciless uncle, and had been only saved by the

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Heruli.

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[1] The Lazic war. The disgrace of Dagisthaeus seems to have occurred in 550.

BOOK V. Ch. 24. 552. humane disobedience of the General in Chief (or Chanaranges) to whom the murderous order had been entrusted, and who eventually paid for his compassion with his life. Many of his countrymen, refugees like himself from the tyranny of Chosroës, followed Kobad to the war in a strange land and in defence of a stranger's claims.

Lombards in the army of Narses. We have left to the last the most important in the eyes of posterity of all this motley horde of chieftains. Audoin, King of the Lombards, rode in the train of Narses at the head of two thousand five hundred brave warriors, who had for their personal attendants more than three thousand men also skilled in war. The mention of these two classes shows us that we are already approaching the days of the knights and squires of chivalry. We hear not much, it is true, of the actual deeds of Audoin in the following campaign, but his importance for us consists in the fact that he is the father of the terrible Alboin, who, sixteen years after the time which we have now reached, will on his own account be crossing the Alpine wall and descending with his savage horde into that fertile plain which thenceforward will to all ages be known as Lombardy. Thus continually do we see the Roman *foederatus* becoming the conqueror of Rome. Thus did Theodosius lead Alaric in his train over the Julian Alps and show him the road to Italy.

Huns. Huns in great numbers, squalid and fierce as ever, but useful soldiers when deeds of daring and hard endurance were needed, urged on their little steeds at the sound of the Imperial bugles. It was indeed a strange army to be charged with asserting the majesty of the Roman Empire and reuniting to it the

552.

old Hesperian land. Could a Cincinnatus or a Regulus have looked upon those wild tribes from beyond the Danube and those dark faces from beside the Euphrates, all under the supreme command of an eunuch from under the shadow of Mount Ararat, he would assuredly have been perplexed to decide whether they or the soldiers of Totila had less claim to the great name of Roman.

But ethnological considerations such as these were beside the mark. A common passion, the hope of the spoil of Italy, fused all these discordant nationalities into one coherent whole. The purse-strings of the Emperor were loosened; and over the whole army hovered the genius of the deep-thoughted Narses, willing to part freely with the treasures of his master, and his own, if only his shaking hand might pluck the laurels which had been denied, in the vigour of middle age, to the mighty Belisarius.

March of the army.

The Imperial army marched round the head of the Hadriatic Gulf: but when it came to the confines of Venetia it found the passage barred by order of the Frankish King. The real reason for this hostile procedure was that for the moment it seemed a more profitable course to keep, than to break, the oaths which the Franks had sworn to the Goths; but the pretext alleged, namely, the presence of the Lombard auxiliaries, foes to the Frankish name, in the army of Narses, had probably also some genuine force. Already these races, which for the following two centuries were to contest with one another the right to plunder Italy, eyed one another with jealous hostility, each foreseeing in the other an unwelcome fellow-guest at the banquet.

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552. Teias at Verona.

Nor were the Franks the only enemies who intervened between the Imperial host and the friendly shelter of Ravenna. More to the west, Teias, one of the bravest of the young officers of Totila, barred the way at Verona against any invader who should seek to enter by the Pass of the Brenner. At the same time, as he hoped, he had so obstructed the bridges over the intricate rivers and canals of Lombardy as to make it impossible for Narses to pass him without fighting a pitched battle.

Clever device for transporting the troops round the head of the Hadriatic.

Narses, as Totila was well aware, did not possess a sufficiently large flotilla to transport his army directly across the head of the Hadriatic Gulf from the mouth of the Isonzo to Classis; but in his perplexity his skilful lieutenant, John, who was well acquainted with the country between Aquileia and Ravenna, suggested to him an expedient by which the few ships which he had might render signal service to the army. The scheme was this: for the soldiers to march close to the sea, where the country, intersected as it is by the mouths of the Piave, Brenta, Adige, and Po, would offer no field for the hostile operations of the Franks, and to use the ships, which were to accompany them within signalling distance, for the transport of the soldiers across the river-estuaries, perhaps also in some cases across the actual lagoons. This difficult operation was successfully effected; the flank, both of the Frankish generals and of Teias, was turned, and Narses with all his army reached Ravenna in safety. Justin, who had been left in charge of Ravenna by Belisarius, and Valerian, the recent victor at Sinigaglia, joined their forces, which were apparently not very numerous, to those of Narses.

552. Message from Usdrilas.

After a stay of nine days at Ravenna there came an insulting message from Usdrilas, who was holding Rimini for the Goths: 'After your vaunted preparations, which have kept all Italy in a ferment, and after trying to strike terror into our hearts by knitting your brows and looking more awful than mortal men, you have crept into Ravenna and are skulking there, afraid of the very name of the Goths. Come out, with all that mongrel host of barbarians to whom you want to deliver Italy, and let us behold you, for the eyes of the Goths hunger for the sight of you.' Narses, on reading these words, laughed at the insolence of the barbarian, but set forward nevertheless with the bulk of his army, leaving a small garrison under Justin at Ravenna.

March to Rimini.

On his arrival at Rimini he found that the bridge over the Marecchia—that noble structure of Augustus which was described in an earlier chapter[1]—was effectually blocked by the enemy[2]. While the soldiers of Narses, some of whom had crossed the river, were looking about for a ford convenient for the passage of the bulk of the army, Usdrilas, with some of his followers, came upon them. A skirmish followed, in which, by a rare stroke of good fortune, the Herulians in the Imperial army slew Usdrilas himself. His head, severed from his body, was brought into the camp of

[1] See p. 267.

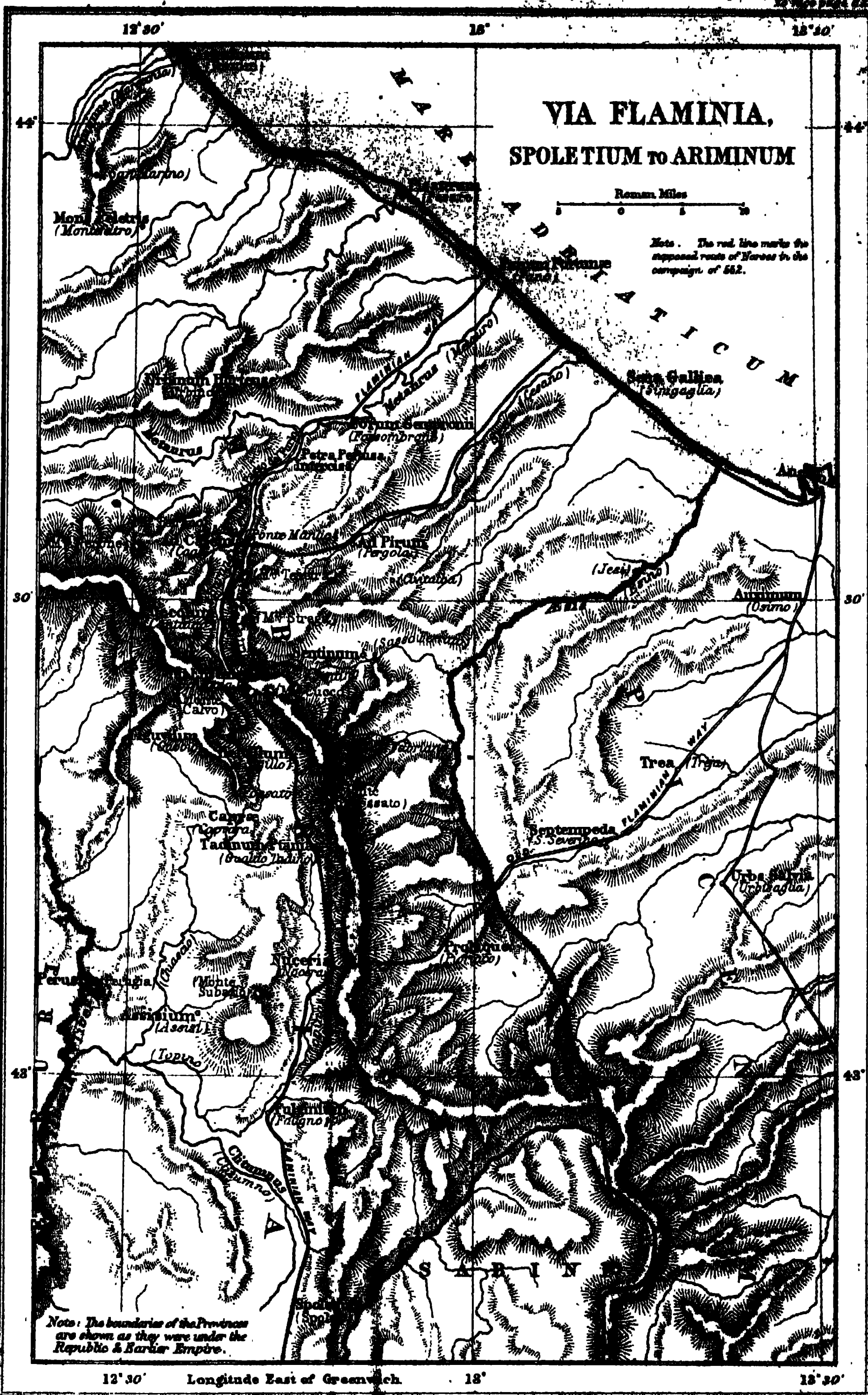
[2] I do not understand what Procopius means by saying that this bridge can with difficulty be crossed by one foot soldier unarmed (ὁ ποταμὸς ἀνδρὶ μὲν ἀόπλῳ ἑνὶ πεζῇ ἰόντι μόλις διαβατὸς γίνεται διὰ τῆς γεφύρας πόνῳ τε καὶ ταλαιπωρίᾳ πολλῇ). The bridge of Augustus is not very wide, but it would surely have been possible for five foot soldiers to march over it abreast. Possibly it may have been at this time in a dilapidated condition.

BOOK V. CH. 24. 552. Narses, and cheered both General and soldiers by this apparent token of divine favour upon their enterprise. The General, however, determined not to stay to prosecute the siege of Rimini, but availed himself of the discouragement of the enemy, caused by the death of Usdrilas, to throw a pontoon bridge across the Marecchia and proceed on his march southwards. 'For he did not choose,' says Procopius, 'to molest either Ariminum or any other post occupied by the enemy, in order that he might not lose time and fail in his most important enterprise by having his attention diverted to minor objects. . . . . After passing Ariminum' [and, we may add, Fanum,] 'he departed from the Flaminian Way and struck off to the left. For the position of Petra Pertusa, which I have described in a previous book of my history, and which is exceedingly strong by nature, having been occupied long before by the enemy, rendered the Flaminian Way altogether impassable to the Romans. Narses, therefore, being thus obliged to quit the shortest road, took that which was available [1].'

Line of march chosen by Narses. We see, from this passage of Procopius, that again, as in previous stages of the war, the possession of Petra Pertusa (the Passo di Furlo [2]) exercised an important influence on the movements of the combatants. As it was now in the hands of the Goths, Narses was compelled to leave the broad highway of Flaminius and to keep southwards along the Hadriatic Gulf till he could find a road which would take him into the Via Flaminia at a point on the Romeward

[1] Ὁδὸν οὖν ὁ Ναρσῆς διὰ ταῦτα τὴν ἐπιτομωτέραν ἀφεὶς τὴν βάσιμον ᾔει.

[2] See p. 262.



Hodgkin's Italy, Vol. IV. – Clarendon Press.

side of the Passo di Furlo. Such a road, as I read his movements, he found before he reached Sinigaglia. Taking a sharp turn to the right near the mouth of the Sena (Cesano), he would be brought, by a march of about thirty-six miles up the valley formed by that stream and across the uplands, to the town of Cales (Cagli[1]). Here the Imperial army would be once more upon the great Flaminian Way, having in fact turned the fortress of Pertusa, but they would be still among narrow defiles, where the road is often carried by narrow bridges over rocky streams. An attack at this part of their course might have easily thrown the army into disorder, and we may be sure that Narses and his chief officers would breathe more freely when, after fourteen miles' march up a sharp ascent crossing and re-crossing the torrent of the Burano, they came at length, at the posting-station Ad Ensem, to the crest of the pass, and saw a broader and less difficult valley spreading below them to the south. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of this posting-station (represented by the modern village of Scheggia[2]), Narses probably encamped and prepared for battle, being aware of the near neighbourhood of the Gothic host. The words of Procopius, who states that the camp was pitched 'upon the Apennine mountains,' and yet 'upon a level spot[3],' describe with great accuracy the exact situation of Scheggia.

[1] See p. 261. This road from Ancona to Cales is given in the Itinerarium Antonini, p. 316, ed. Wesseling: but the distances are very much under stated.

[2] See p. 260. The highest point of the pass is 2300 feet above the level of the sea.

[3] Ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ Ἀπεννίνῳ ἐνστρατοπεδευσάμενοι ἔμενον, ἐν χωρίῳ ὁμαλῷ (p. 610).

BOOK V. CH. 24. 552. Movements of Totila.

Meanwhile Totila, after receiving the news of the untoward events which had happened in Venetia, tarried for some time in the neighbourhood of Rome to give the soldiers of Teias, now outflanked and useless, time to rejoin his standards. When all but two thousand of these had arrived he started upon the northward march, through Etruria and Umbria. His movements were quickened by hearing of the death of Usdrilas and the ineffectual attempt of the garrison of Rimini to arrest the progress of the invaders. Knowing that the pass of Furlo was blocked, he was probably uncertain as to the precise point at which Narses would seek to traverse the great Apennine wall that intervened between him and Rome. Scanning doubtless with eagerness every possible outlet through the mountains, he had reached the little town of Tadinum[1]. Further north he had not been able to penetrate, before Narses arrived upon the crest of the pass[2].

Character of the battle-field.

Here then, upon the Flaminian Way, but high up in the heart of the Apennines, must be fought the battle which was to decide once and for ever the embittered quarrel between the nation of the Ostrogoths and Eastern Rome. The place is worthy to be the theatre of great events. It is close to the 'House of two Waters[3],' from which flows on one side a stream that

[1] See p. 260. Procopius calls this place Taginae. Its modern name is Gualdo Tadino. Its early importance is attested by the mention of its inhabitants, under the form Tarsinater, in the Eugubine Tables, vii. a. 11, and of the 'trifu Tadinate' in the same Tables, i. b. 17.

[2] From the fact that the tidings of the battle which is about to be described reached Constantinople in the month of August (Theophanes, A. M. 6044), we may probably infer that it was fought towards the end of July.

[3] Casa di Due Acque.

eventually swells the waters of the Tiber and passes out into the Tyrrhene Sea, on the other the torrent of the Burano, which pours itself through rocky defiles northwards to the Hadriatic. The valley itself is a sort of long trough sloping gradually towards the south. On the eastern side, with their summits for the most part invisible from this point, rise some of the greatest mountains of the Apennine chain, snow-crowned Monte Cucco, Monte Catria with its grand buttress, Monte Corno, Monte Strega looking like a witch's hand with five skinny fingers pointing upward to the sky. On the opposite side of the valley, upon our right as we look towards Rome, rises a lower but more picturesque range of hills. These sharp serrated summits, so clearly defined against the sunset sky, are Monte S. Ubaldo and Monte Calvo, the mountains of Gubbio. At their base, hidden from us because on the other side of them lies the little city of Gubbio, dear to scholars for its precious Eugubine Tables which enshrine the language of ancient Umbria, and dear to painters for the frescoes of Nelli, one of the most reverent of the artists of Umbria.

Difficulty of ascertaining the exact site.

The distance between Scheggia and Tadino is about fifteen miles, agreeing closely enough with the distance of one hundred stadia which, according to Procopius, intervened at first between the camps of the two generals. But a more precise identification of the site of the battle I am not able to furnish. I have no doubt that it was fought south of Scheggia and north of Tadino; but Procopius, whose campaigning days were over, and who was evidently not himself present at the battle, does not, I fear, enable us to fix the site more accurately than this.

BOOK V. Ch. 24.

552. Message from Narses to Totila.

As soon as Narses had encamped his army he sent an embassy to Totila, strongly recommending him to lay down his arms and abandon the hopeless task of resisting, with his handful of disorderly followers, the whole might of the Roman Empire. If, however, the ambassadors perceived him still bent on battle they were to ask him to name the day. Totila haughtily rejected the counsels of his foe, and when asked upon what day he proposed to fight, replied, 'In eight days from this time.' Narses suspected a stratagem and prepared for battle on the morrow. He had read his enemy's mind aright. On the very next day Totila suddenly appeared with his whole army and encamped at the distance of two bowshots from the Imperialists.

The key of the position.

A hill of moderate height (probably an outlier of the main Apennine range) looked down upon both armies, and commanded a path by which the Imperial host might be taken in rear. The possession of this hill was at once seen to be a matter of great importance to either side, but Narses was beforehand with Totila in seizing this coign of vantage. Fifty picked foot-soldiers were sent to occupy it during the night, and when day dawned the Goths, from their encampment opposite, saw these men drawn up in serried array, and having their front protected by the bed of a torrent running parallel to the only path, before alluded to. A squadron of cavalry was sent to dislodge them, but the Romans kept their rank, and by clashing upon their shields so frightened the horses of the Goths that they were able to lay low many an embarrassed rider with their spear-thrusts. The cavalry fell into helpless confusion, and retired discomfited. Again and again with fresh squadrons of

Struggle for its possession.

BOOK V. CH. 24. 552.

horse did Totila attempt to dislodge them, but the brave Fifty kept their ground unbroken. The honours of this fight fell pre-eminently to two men, by name Paulus and Ausilas, who stepped forth, Horatius-like, before their comrades to bear the stress of battle. They laid their scimitars on the ground and drew their bows, slaying a horse or a man with each discharge, so long as there was an arrow in their quivers. Then drawing their swords they lopped off one by one the spear-heads which the Goths protruded against them. By these repeated strokes the sword of Paulus was at length so bent as to become quite useless. He threw it on the ground and, with his unarmed hands, seized and broke no fewer than four of the spears of the enemy. This desperate valour more than anything else daunted the Gothic assailants and compelled them to abandon their attempt upon the hill where the Fifty were posted. Paulus was rewarded after the battle by being made one of the guardsmen of Narses.

The harangues of the Generals.

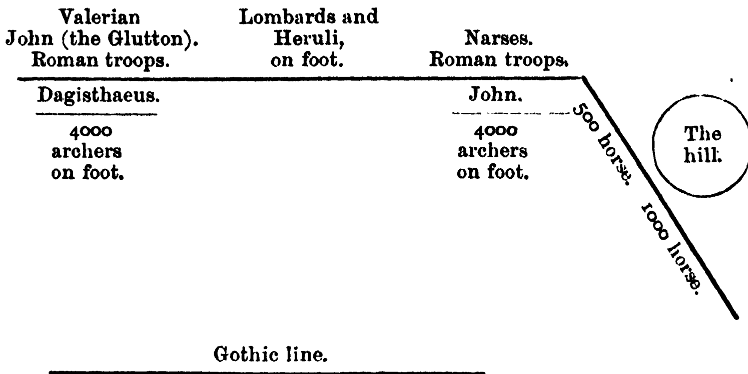
Now were the two main armies drawn up in battle array, and in that position they were harangued by their respective leaders. Narses congratulated his troops on their evident superiority to the band of robbers and deserters who composed the Gothic host; a superiority which, by the Divine favour, was certain to bring them the victory. He reviled the soldiers in the hostile army as the run-away slaves of the Emperor, their King as a leader picked out of the gutter, and declared that it was only by tricks and thievish artifice that they had so long been able to harass the Empire. Lastly, he dwelt upon the ephemeral character of all the barbaric royalties, contrasting them with the settled order, the deep vitality, the

BOOK V. CH. 24. 552. *diuturnity* (if such a word may be allowed us) of the mighty Roman State. Totila, perceiving that a shiver of admiring awe ran through the Gothic lines at the sight of the mighty host of the Empire, called upon his comrades for one last effort of valour, a last effort, since Justinian, like themselves, was weary of the war, and, if discomfited now, would molest them no more for ever. 'After all, why should any soldier fly? The only motive could be love of life, and he was infinitely safer, to appeal to no higher motive, fighting in the ranks with the enemy than after he had once turned his back before them. Nor were they really the formidable host which they seemed. Huns, and Longobards, and Heruli, a motley horde got together from all quarters, like the miscellaneous dishes of a club-feast, they had no bond of unity, no instinct of cohesion. Their pay was the only inducement to fight that they could understand, and now that they had received that, it would not be surprising if, in compliance with the secret orders of their national leaders, they absolutely melted away from the ranks on the field of undesired battle.'

Order of battle. Narses, who had evidently the superiority in numbers as well as in equipment, drew up his troops in the following order. In the centre he stationed his barbarian allies, the Lombards and the Heruli, and, as he was not over-confident of their stability, he directed them to dismount and fight on foot, in order that flight might not be easy if they were minded to fly. All his best Roman troops, with picked men from among the Hunnish barbarians, men who for their prowess had been selected as body-guards, he stationed on his left wing, where he himself and his lieutenant

John were in command. This portion of the army was covered by the hill before described, which was held by the fifty valiant men, and which seems to have been 'the key of the position.' Under this hill, and at an angle with the rest of his line, Narses

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stationed two bodies of cavalry, numbering respectively one thousand and five hundred. The five hundred were to watch the Roman line and strengthen any part which might seem for the moment to be wavering. The thousand were to wait for the commencement of the action, and then to strain every nerve in order to get to the rear of the Goths, and so place them between two attacks. On the left wing were the rest of the Roman troops under John the Glutton, together with Valerian and Dagisthaeus. On each flank was a force of four thousand archers, fighting, contrary to the usual custom of Roman archers in those days, on foot. Looking at the tactics of the Roman general as a whole, we perceive an almost ostentatious disregard of what might happen to his centre. He was determined to conquer with the wings of his army, determined that Totila, not he, should make the attack, and that when the enemy

BOOK V. CH. 24. 552. attacked he should be outflanked and surrounded by the picked troops on his right and left.

We have no particulars as to the Gothic order of battle. We know only that Totila 'drew up his troops in the same manner as the enemy had done,' that, unlike Narses, he relied a good deal on the effect to be produced by his cavalry, and that he ordered his warriors to use no weapon but the spear, herein, according to Procopius, committing a fatal blunder, and, in fact, handing the game over to the Romans, whose soldiers, more elastic in their movements and trusted with greater freedom by their commanders, might thrust with the spear, transfix with the arrow, or hew down with the broadsword, each as he found he could fight most successfully.

Totila pauses. There was a pause, a long pause, before the two armies encountered one another. It was for Totila to commence, and he, knowing that the last two thousand men of the army of Teias were on their way to join him, purposely postponed the signal. Various demonstrations filled up these waiting hours of the morning. Totila rode along his line, with firm voice and cheery countenance, exhorting his men to be of good courage. The Eunuch-General appealed not to the patriotism or the manhood of his miscellaneous horde of warriors, but to their avarice, riding in front of them and dangling, before their hungry eyes, armlets, twisted collars, and bridles, all of gold. 'These,' said he, 'and such other prizes as these shall reward your valour if you fight well to-day.'

Then rode forth Cocas (once a Roman soldier but now serving Totila) and challenged the bravest of the Imperial host to single combat. An Armenian,

Anzalas by name, accepted the challenge. Cocas rode impetuously on, couching his spear, which he aimed at the belly of his antagonist. A sudden swerve of the Armenian, made at the right moment of time, saved his life and enabled him in passing to give a fatal thrust at the left flank of his antagonist. With a crash fell Cocas from his horse, and a great shout from the Roman ranks hailed this presage of victory.

Totila's display of horsemanship.

Still the Gothic two thousand lingered, and in order further to pass the time, Totila, who had been practised from his youth in all the arts of horsemanship, gratified the two armies with an extraordinary performance. Richly dressed, with gold lavishly displayed on helmet, mail, and greaves, with purple favours fluttering from his cheek-strap, his *pilum* and his spear, he rode forth on his high-spirited horse between the opposed squadrons. Now he wheeled his horse to the right, then sharply to the left. Anon he threw his heavy spear up to the morning breezes, stretched out his hand and caught it by the middle in its quivering fall. Then he tossed the spear from hand to hand, he lay back in his saddle, he rose with disparted legs, he bent to one side, then to the other; he displayed in their perfection all the accomplishments of the Gothic *manège*. Strange anticipation of the coming dawn of chivalry! Strange but fatal contrast between the lithe form of the young barbarian hero, rejoicing in his strength, and the bowed figure of the withered and aged Eunuch whose wily brain was even then surely devising the athlete's overthrow. Still further to delay the battle, Totila sent a message to Narses inviting him to a conference; but the Eunuch declined the offer, saying that Totila had

BOOK V. CH. 24. before professed himself eager for the fight, and now might have his wish.

552. The attempted surprise. At length, just at the time of the noonday meal[1], the expected two thousand arrived in the Gothic camp. Totila, who had drawn back his army within their entrenchments, bade them and the new-comers take food and don armour with all speed, and then led them forth precipitately, hoping to catch the Imperial host in the disorder and relaxation of the midday repast. Not so, however, was Narses to be outwitted. This sudden attack was the very thing which he had looked for, and to guard against its evil consequences no regular luncheon, no noontide slumber, had been permitted to his men. Their food had been served out to them while still under arms and keeping rank, as to the knights of a later day—

'Who drank the red wine through the helmet barred.'

Moreover, true to his policy of taking the Goths in flank, he had turned his straight line into a crescent, drawing back his barbarian centre and trusting to the eight thousand archers on his wings to give a good account of the enemy.

Failure of the Gothic charge. These tactics were completely successful. Totila's charge of horse failed to reach the Imperial centre, and while they were engaged in this hopeless quest, the eight thousand archers kept up a murderous discharge of arrows on their flanks. The Lombards and Heruli also, whose disposition for fighting had been up to the last moment uncertain, threw themselves into the fray with unexpected eagerness, so that Procopius is

[1] ἄριστον. Narses apparently allowed his men no ἄριστον, and had ordered them even to take their breakfast (ἀκρατίζεσθαι) under arms.

doubtful whether they or their Roman fellow-soldiers displayed the more brilliant valour. BOOK V. CH. 24.

For some time the Gothic mounted spearmen maintained the unequal fight, but when the sun was declining their heavy masses came staggering back towards the supporting infantry. It was not an orderly retreat; there was no thought of forming again and charging the pursuing foe. It seemed to the Romans that the hearts of the Goths had suddenly died within them, as if they had met with an army of ghosts, or felt that they were fighting against Heaven. The flight of the cavalry was so headlong and so violent that some of their own friends were trampled to death under their horsehoofs. 552. Repulse of the cavalry.

The contagion of fear imparted itself to the supporting infantry. They probably knew themselves outnumbered, they saw themselves outflanked, and they fled in irretrievable disorder. The Imperialists pressed on unpitying, slaying Gothic warrior and Roman deserter with equal fury. Some of the vanquished cried for quarter and obtained it at the time, but were soon after perfidiously slain by their captors. In all the Gothic army none were saved except by headlong flight. Utter rout of the Goths.

And where the while was Totila, he of the gold-embossed shield and purple-fluttering spear? One account states that, being disguised as a common soldier, he was wounded by an arrow, shot at a venture, at the beginning of the fight, and that his departure from the field, together with the depression resulting from such an apparent sign of the anger of Heaven, caused the subsequent disorder. Another account, that which Procopius seems to have preferred, related Flight of Totila.

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that the Gothic King, still unwounded and possibly in mean disguise, fled at nightfall with four or five followers, on swift horses, from the battle-field. They were closely pursued by some Imperialist soldiers, ignorant of the rank of the fugitive. One of these, Asbad the Gepid, was about to strike Totila in the back with his spear. A young Goth belonging to the royal household cried out, 'Dog! what mean you by trying to strike your own lord[1]?' The incautious exclamation revealed the secret of Totila's identity, and of course Asbad thrust in his spear with all the greater vigour. Scipuar (the recent besieger of Ancona) wounded Asbad in the foot, but himself received a stroke which hindered his further flight. The companions of Asbad tarried to dress the wound of their fallen friend. Totila's companions, who thought they were still pursued, hurried him on, though mortally stricken and now scarcely breathing. At length, at the village of Caprae, thirteen miles from the battle-field, they stopped and tried to tend his wound. But it was too late; in a few minutes the hero's life was ended.

Death of Totila.

The traveller who is journeying from Gubbio to Tadino, when he is drawing near to the latter place, sees from the bridge over the Chiascio a little hamlet among the hills to the right, which bears the name of Caprara. There seems no good reason for doubting that this is the place, formerly known as Caprae, to which the faithful Goths bore their pallid master, and where they laid him down to die.

[1] Τί τοῦτο, ὦ κύων, τὸν δεσπότην τὸν σαυτοῦ πλήξων ὥρμηκας; The words 'your own lord' are perhaps accounted for by the fact that the Gepids were a tribe related to the Goths.

According to the other story heard by Procopius, Totila was forced by the intolerable pain of his wound to quit the field of battle, and ride by himself to Caprae, but at that place was compelled to alight and have his wound dressed, in the course of which operation he died.

The Romans had no knowledge of the death of their great enemy till a woman of the Goths informed them of the fact, and offered to show them the grave. They disinterred the dead body, looked at the discoloured features, saw that they were indeed those of Totila; then, without offering any further indignity to the corpse, they hurried off with the glad tidings to Narses, who was piously thanking God and the Virgin for the victory.

In the month of August messengers arrived at Constantinople bearing the tidings of victory, attesting them by the blood-stained robe and gemmed helmet of the Gothic king[1], which they cast at the feet of the Emperor in his stately Hall of Audience.

And thus ended the career of the Teutonic hero Baduila—for we must restore him his own name in death—a man who perhaps more even than Theodoric himself deserves to be considered the type and embodiment of all that was noblest in the Ostrogothic nation, and who, if he had filled the place of Athalaric or even

[1] Καὶ τῷ Αὐγούστῳ μηνὶ ἐπινίκια ἦλθεν ἀπὸ Ῥώμης Ναρσῆ τοῦ κουβουκουλαρίου καὶ ἐξάρχου Ῥωμαίων. . . . Ἔλαβεν γὰρ τὴν Ῥώμην καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν Τώτιλαν καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἡμαγμένα σὺν τῷ διαλίθῳ. καμηλαυκίῳ ἔπεμψεν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει· καὶ ἐρρίφησαν εἰς τοὺς πόδας τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπὶ σεκρέτου. I am indebted to Prof. Bury (i. 413) for calling my attention to this important passage of Theophanes, which fixes approximately the date of the battle of the Apennines.

BOOK V. CH. 24. 552. of Witigis, would assuredly have made for himself a world-famous name in European history. If the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy might but have lived, Baduila would have held the same high place in its annals which Englishmen accord to Alfred, Frenchmen to Charlemagne, and Germans to the mighty Barbarossa.

NOTE E. On the Site of the Battle of 552.

For a full discussion of this question I must refer to an article written by me for the 'Atti e Memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Provincie di Romagna, 1884' (pp. 35–70). NOTE E.

It may at once be stated that the whole difficulty arises from the following sentences in Procopius, with which I have not thought it necessary to encumber my narrative. 'The camp of Narses was pitched on level ground, which was however closely surrounded by many mounds, said to mark the scene of the defeat and destruction of the host of the Gauls by Camillus, the Roman general. Even down to my own time the place bears witness to the deed, and by its name *Busta Gallorum* preserves the memory of the Gallic overthrow, *busta* being the Latin word for that which is left from the pyre; and in this place there are a very great number of high-heaped tombs of those slain Gauls.'

Now it is admitted on all hands that there is at least one great mistake here, and the only question is whether there are not two or three, and in fact whether it is worth considering at all. It is almost as certain as any fact can be in history, that Camillus never fought any battle with the Gauls in Umbria, the scenes of his exploits being all much nearer Rome, at the Allia, Velitrae, Sutrium, and so forth; places only a quarter as far from Rome as this where Procopius would place his victory. Then the *Busta Gallica* of which Livy speaks[1] in connection with the burnt bodies of Gauls slain by Camillus are in Rome itself, not even in Latium, much less in Umbria. It is evident, therefore, that there is some extraordinary misconception on the part of Procopius, or perhaps of some centurion in the army of Narses with a little smattering of Roman history, from whom Procopius may have derived his information.

But there was a great battle fought with the Gauls *in agro Sentinati* at or near the spot we are now speaking of in the Third Samnite War. The date of the battle was B.C. 295 (seventy

[1] v. 48.

NOTE E. years after the death of Camillus), and the hero of it was the younger Decius, who, by devoting himself to death, turned the apparently imminent defeat of the Romans into a victory. Now, it is said, this is evidently the battle of which Procopius was thinking. It was fought 'in agro Sentinati;' and the site of Sentinum is near to the modern town of Sasso Ferrato; and therefore at or near Sasso Ferrato we must look for the *Busta Gallorum* and the battle-field of Narses and Totila.

From this argument I utterly dissent. Sasso Ferrato is on the other side of the Apennines from Tadino. Narses might have marched thither, but Totila could not, consistently with the narrative of Procopius. The best of the roads between Tadino and Sasso Ferrato is a high mountain pass, somewhat resembling the Pass of Glencoe. The rest are little more than mountain paths, carried through deep gorges in which no armies could manœuvre. Any one of them, if battles had been fought there, must have left its mark on the historian's recital.

I am not sure whether it is worth while to try to reconcile the hint here given by Procopius with any theory as to the battle-field. His story is in itself strange and improbable. Can any one suppose that the burnt bodies of any number of Gaulish combatants slain at the battle of Sentinum or anywhere else could, after the lapse of more than eight centuries, still form a number of eminences[1], the possession of which could be, as Procopius hints, of importance to the contending armies? But if the point is worth arguing for, a good deal is to be said in support of the view that the battle of B. C. 295, in which Decius fell, was itself fought at or near Scheggia. The river Sentino, upon which the city of Sentinum stood, rises a little west of Scheggia, which might, I conceive, be correctly described as 'in agro Sentinati,' and with the single exception of the words 'transgresso Apennino' in Livy's account of the movements of the consuls previous to the battle, everything that we are told concerning it fits remarkably well with Scheggia, itself a strong position and the key to four important valleys.

Upon the whole, however, I think it is safer to disregard the *Busta Gallorum* of Procopius altogether. It is evident that there is a large amount of inaccuracy in the sentence relating to them, and how far that inaccuracy reaches none can say.

[1] Χῶροι λοφώδεις (p. 611).

My friend Mr. Bryce has devoted great pains to the settlement of this question. He has paid two visits, and I one, to the valleys of the Chiascio and Sentino, in order to examine the *locus in quo*, and we have been much helped in our investigations by an excellent local antiquary, S. Ulpiano Garofoli of Sigillo. Mr. Bryce (for reasons which he intends to state in a memoir on the subject) is disposed to set a higher value on the claims of the Sasso Ferrato site than I do, but on the whole inclines to the conclusion which I have set forth in the previous chapter. He thinks, however, that the immediate vicinity of Scheggia hardly affords room for the evolution of such large bodies of men as those described by Procopius, and, in deference to his better judgment, I have somewhat modified the views expressed in the article before mentioned, and now hold that the camp of Narses may not have been pitched at Scheggia itself, but at some point south of that place where the valley is somewhat broader. NOTE E.

CHAPTER XXV.

FINIS GOTHORUM.

Authorities.

Sources:—

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PROCOPIUS, De Bello Gotthico[1], iv. 33–35 (pp. 627–643).
AGATHIAS supplies a few particulars.

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Narses gets rid of his Lombard allies.

THE first care of Narses, after the battle was ended and he had expressed his thankfulness for the victory to Heaven, was to remove from Italy as speedily as possible some of the earthly instruments by whom the victory had been won. Of all his wild horde of *foederati* none were more savage than the Lombards. Every peasant's cottage where they passed was given to the devouring flame, and the hapless women of Italy, torn even from the altars at which they had taken refuge, must needs gratify the lust of these squalid barbarians. By the gift of large sums of money he persuaded these dishonouring allies to promise to return to their own land; and Valerian, with his nephew Damian, were sent with a body of troops to watch their journey to the Julian Alps, and to see

[1] The reader will observe that Gothorum is written with one *t* and Gotthico with two. The first is the Latin form of the name, from which we take our word Gothic. The second is from the Greek form, Γότθοι, which more accurately represents the original *Gutthiudai*.

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that they did not deviate from the road to engage in the delightful work of devastation. This duty accomplished, Valerian commenced the siege of Verona, the garrison of which soon expressed their willingness to surrender. Now, however, the Frankish generals appeared upon the scene, and in the name of their master forbade Verona to be reunited to the Empire. Owing to the number of fortresses which they now held in Upper Italy, they considered all the land north of the Po to be in fact Frankish territory, and would suffer no city within its borders to surrender to the generals of Justinian. Not feeling himself strong enough to challenge this conclusion, Valerian moved off to the banks of the Po to prevent the Gothic army of Upper Italy from crossing that river and marching to the relief of Rome.

Teias crowned King of the Goths.

Meanwhile the little remnant of Goths who had escaped from the fatal field on which Totila fell had made their way to Pavia, where, even as it had been twelve years ago after the surrender of Ravenna, the last hope of their race was enshrined. By common consent Teias [1], son of Fritigern, the bravest of Totila's generals and a man probably still young or in early middle life, was acclaimed as King. The Gothic army was now deplorably weakened, not by deaths only, but probably by desertions also, for the full purse which Narses was ever displaying doubtless drew back many of the former soldiers of the Empire to their old allegiance. Teias accordingly strained every nerve to obtain a cordial alliance with the Franks, without which he deemed it impossible to meet Narses in the

[1] Also called Theias and Thila on his coins. We learn the name of his father from Agathias.

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open field. The royal treasure in the stronghold of Pavia was all expended in lavish gifts to Theudibald and his Court in order to obtain this alliance. The Franks took the money of the dying Gothic nationality, and decided not to give it any assistance, but to let Emperor and King fight out their battle to the end, that Italy might fall an easier prey to themselves.

Surrender of Gothic fortresses.

For some time Valerian seems to have prevented Teias and his little army from crossing the Po; and meanwhile the surrender of Gothic fortresses was going on all over Italy. Narni and Spoleto opened their gates to Narses immediately after the battle of the Apennines. At Perugia a similar event to that which had brought the city into the power of the Goths restored it to the possession of the Emperor. The renegade soldier Uliphus, who eight years before had murdered Cyprian[1], had since then held Perugia for the Gothic King, having his old comrade and fellow-deserter Meligedius for his second in command. Meligedius now commenced secret negotiations for the surrender of the city to Narses. Uliphus and his party got scent of the intrigue, and endeavoured to prevent it by force. A fight of the factions followed, in which Uliphus was killed; and his comrade then without difficulty handed over the Umbrian stronghold to an Imperial garrison.

Tarentum not surrendered by Ragnaris.

At Tarentum, strangely enough, the negotiations for surrender which had been commenced by the Gothic governor were not quickened by the battle of the Apennines. Ragnaris had possibly some dim visions of himself wearing the crown of Totila, and

[1] See p. 463.

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he believed moreover that the Franks allied with the Goths would yet turn the tide of war. He accordingly repented of his promise to the besiegers, and began to cast about him for an excuse to get the hostages whom he had given back into his own power. He therefore sent to Pacurius, governor of Otranto, asking for a few Imperial soldiers to escort him to the latter city. Pacurius, suspecting no evil, fell into the snare, and sent him fifty soldiers, whom Ragnaris at once announced that he should hold as hostages till *his* hostages were surrendered. Pacurius, enraged, marched with the larger part of his army against Tarentum. The cruel and faithless Ragnaris slew the fifty involuntary hostages, but was himself routed in the battle which followed, and fled to Acherontia. Tarentum opened her gates to the standards of the Empire[1]; and in Central Italy the extrêmely important position of Petra Pertusa speedily followed her example.

Rome taken.

These various sieges and surrenders all over Italy were probably going on throughout the summer and autumn of the year 552; but meanwhile the great prize, which every Imperial general was bound to strive for, had already been won upon the soldier-trampled banks of the Tiber. Having by his orders to Valerian secured himself from an irruption of Teias and his Goths from Upper Italy, Narses marched to Rome with a great army, chiefly composed of archers, and encamped before its walls. The Gothic garrison concentrated their strength on what might be called

[1] Procopius does not directly state this (p. 634), but his narrative implies it. He mentions also a fortress in Tuscia ὃ δὴ Νέπα καλοῦσι, which surrendered at the same time. This is probably Nepete in Etruria.

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the city of Totila, a comparatively small space round the Tomb of Hadrian which the young King, after his first destruction of the City, had laboured to rebuild and to fortify. The Goths were utterly unable to defend, and even the army of Narses was unable to invest, the whole circuit of the walls, and the fighting which went on was therefore on both sides of a detached and desultory character. At one point the attack was made by Narses himself, at another by John, at a third by Philemuth and his Herulians; but after all, the honours of the siege fell to none of these, but to Dagisthaeus, so lately the inmate of a prison, now again the leader of the legions. With a band of soldiers bearing the standards of Narses and of John, and carrying scaling-ladders, he suddenly appeared before an unguarded portion of the walls, applied his ladders to their sides, mounted his men on the battlements, and hastened at their head through the ruined City to open the gates to his brother generals. The Goths, at the sight of the Imperial soldiers, gave up all hope of holding the City, and fled, some to Porto, some to the Tomb of Hadrian; and even this, their fortress, was soon surrendered on condition that the lives of the garrison should be spared.

Portus and Centumcellae taken.

The two harbours of Porto and Civita Vecchia before long fell also into the hands of the Imperialists [1]. The keys of Rome were again sent to Justinian; a ceremony which must have brought a smile to the lips of any philosophical observer who remembered that this was the *fifth* capture that Roma Invicta had under-

[1] Procopius narrates only the investment of Civita Vecchia (p. 635). Agathias (p. 37, ed. Bonn) mentions its fall, which was in the year 553.

gone during the reign of this single Emperor, and who knew what a mere husk of the once glorious City was now dignified with the name of Rome. BOOK V. CH. 25. — 552.

Men remarked with wonder, and Procopius with his accustomed comments on the mutability of fortune, that Dagisthaeus had now taken the city which Bessas had lost, while in the East, in the gorges of Caucasus, Bessas had recovered the fortress of Petra which had been lost by the slothfulness of Dagisthaeus. Vicissitudes of Fortune.

To the scanty remains of the Roman Senate and people the recovery of the Imperial City brought no good. They were dispersed over Italy, chiefly in Campania, and were lodged in fortresses garrisoned by Goths. The war had now become one of extermination between the two races, and the word went forth to slay them wherever they could be found. Maximus, the grandson of the Emperor, whose life had been spared after Totila's capture of Rome, now fell a victim to the rage of the barbarians; and Teias tarnished his fame as a warrior by putting to death three hundred lads of handsome appearance, sons of Roman nobles, whom Totila had selected really as hostages, but ostensibly as pages of his court, and had held in safe-keeping in Northern Italy. Hard fate of the Roman Senators.

Meanwhile the sands of Ostrogothic dominion were running low. With a war of extermination begun, and with the invading race reduced as it now was to a few thousand men, the end could not be long doubtful. The war dwindled down into an attempt on the one part to seize, and on the other to defend, the last remainder of the Gothic treasure. The great hoard at Pavia had nearly all gone to propitiate the faithless Franks; but there was still a yet larger Siege of Cumae.

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hoard, collected by Totila, deposited in the old fortress of Cumae in Campania, hard by the Lake of Avernus and the Sibyl's Cave. This fortress was commanded by Aligern, the brother of Teias; with whom was joined Herodian, erewhile Roman governor of Spoleto, the greatness of whose crime against the Emperor kept him faithful to the Gothic King. In order to capture the treasure, Narses sent a considerable detachment of his army into Campania. While he himself remained in Rome, trying to bring back something of order into the wilderness-city, he sent John and Philemuth the Herulian into Tuscany to hold the passes and prevent Teias from marching southwards to the assistance of his brother. With much skill, however, Teias contrived, by making a great detour into Picenum and the Hadriatic provinces, and twice crossing the Apennines, to march with his little army into Campania. Learning this, Narses summoned his generals from every quarter, John, Philemuth, Valerian[1], to join him in one great movement southwards, in order to crush out the last remains of Gothic nationality on the Campanian plains.

Teias marches southwards.

The rapidity of the movements of the Imperial generals seems to have frustrated the plans of Teias. He was in Campania indeed, but he had not, if I read his movements aright, effected a junction with his brother, nor succeeded in reaching Cumae. He had descended from the mountains near Nocera, some ten miles to the east of the base of Vesuvius, while Cumae, where his brother guarded the great hoard, lay westwards of Naples, fully fifteen miles on the other side of the great volcano.

[1] Who was holding the Passo di Furlo.

Here, then, at length Narses and all the best generals of the Empire, with their large and many-nationed army, succeeded in bringing to bay the little troop which followed the last King of the Goths. The small stream of the Draco, now known as the Sarno, marked the line between the contending armies, a stream unimportant in itself, but which, working its way between deep and steep banks, offered an effectual opposition to the free movements of cavalry. Behind them the Goths had the lofty mountain-range now known as the Monte S. Angelo which fills up the peninsula of Amalfi and Sorrento, before them the Sarno and the fertile plain which reaches to the base of Vesuvius, and in which are visible in the distance the green mounds of Pompeii.

552. Last battle-field, near the Sarno.

In this little peninsula the army of Teias stood at bay for two months[1]. Their ships still commanded the sea, and having communication with some harbour in their rear, probably Salerno or Stabia, they freely obtained all the provisions that they required. They had fortified the bridge over the Sarno with wooden towers, upon which they placed *balistae* and other engines of war, thus successfully barring the approach of the enemy. Every now and then, however, a challenge would be given or received, and a Gothic champion would stalk across the bridge to meet some Imperial warrior in single combat. At the end of the two months a traitorous admiral surrendered the Gothic fleet to the enemy, who had been moreover collecting ships in large numbers from Sicily and all parts of the Empire. The Goths, whose situation was becoming

The armies face one another for two months.

The Goths lose the command of the sea.

[1] Possibly December 552 and January 553, but the indications of time in Procopius are here very vague.

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553. Retire to Monte Lettere.

desperate, fell back from their previous line, and took up their position in the Mons Lactarius[1], an outlier of the St. Angelo range which rises abruptly above the valley of the Sarno. They were safe for the time, since the army of Narses dared not follow them into that rocky region; but they soon repented of their retreat, finding only death by starvation awaiting them in the mountains. With a sudden resolve, and hoping to take the Imperial army by surprise, they rushed down into the plain, and a battle, the last pitched battle between the Ostrogoths and the armies of the Empire, began[2].

The battle.

The Imperialists were to a certain extent caught unawares, but their discipline and superior numbers prevented them from being out-manœuvred. The legions and the bands of the *foederati* could not group themselves in their accustomed order, nor gather round the standards of their respective generals. Each man had to fight how he could and where he could,

[1] Hill of Milk, now Monte Lettere.

[2] It will be seen from the narrative in the text that the indications of the battle-field given by Procopius are not very precise. There is nothing, however, in his story which disagrees with the site fixed for it by local tradition, namely *Pozzo dei Goti* (Well of the Goths). This place is one kilometer west of the town of Angri, just at the foot of Monte Lettere, and about a mile and a half from the Sarno. The chief building is a fine country-house, now used as a linen-factory. It derives its name from a large well, now covered up and bricked in, which according to tradition was once filled with bones of the Goths. In the time of King Joachim, as I was told, a body or skeleton was found a little north of the house and carried off for burial by the monks. The peasants who guided me knew nothing about the story of the battle, but persisted in calling the place Pozzo dei Goti, not Pizzo Aguto, which is the name given to it in Murray's Guide, and that for which I accordingly enquired.

obeying not the commands of his officer but his own instincts of valour. The Goths dismounted from their horses and formed themselves into a deep phalanx, and the Romans, whether from policy or generosity, dismounted from their horses also and fought in the same formation. It was a battle between despair on the one side, and on the other raging shame at the very thought of being beaten by such a mere handful of antagonists. King Teias stood with a little band of followers in front of the Gothic ranks, and performed, in the judgment of the Greek historian, deeds worthy of the old days of the heroes. Covering his body with his broad Gothic shield he made a sudden rush, now here, now there, and transfixed with his spear many of his foes. Vainly meanwhile were the Roman lances thrust at him, and the Roman arrows did but bury themselves in his mighty buckler. When this, being full of arrows, became too heavy for his arm, an armour-bearer, deftly interposing a new shield, relieved him of the old one.

Teias slain.

A third of the day had worn away in this strife of heroes, and now was the buckler of Teias heavy with the weight of twelve hostile arrows hanging from it. Without flinching by a finger's breadth from his post in the forefront of the battle, and standing like one rooted to the ground, the King, still dealing death around him, called eagerly to his squire for another shield. He came, he removed the arrow-laden shield and sought to interpose a fresh one, but in the moment of the exchange a javelin pierced the breast of Teias, and he fell mortally wounded to the ground.

The battle renewed next day.

When the Imperial soldiers saw that they had laid their great enemy low, they rushed to the corpse, cut

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553.

off the head, and carried it along the line of battle to impart new courage to their comrades and strike panic into the hearts of his followers. Yet not even then were the Ostrogoths daunted. They fought on with the courage of despair till night descended; they renewed the battle next day with sore and savage hearts. At length in some pause of the strife, caused by the utter weariness of either army, the Goths sent a message to Narses that they perceived that God was against them, and if they could obtain honourable conditions they would renounce the war. Their conditions were these:—No service under the banners of the hated Empire; leave to depart from Italy and live as free men in some other kingdom of the barbarians; leave also to collect their moveable property from the various fortresses in which it was stored up, and take it with them to defray their expenses on the road.

The Goths offer to leave Italy.

Narses accepts their offer.

Narses deliberated on this proposal in a council of war, and by the advice of John, unwilling to goad these men, already desperate, to utter madness, wisely accepted it. His only stipulations were that they should bind themselves to leave Italy and to engage in no future war against any part of the Roman Empire. One thousand Goths refusing to accept these terms, broke out of their camp, escaped the vigilance of the enemy, and under the command of Indulph (the general who commanded in the sea-fight off Sinigaglia) succeeded in marching across Italy to Ticinum. That city, as well as Cumae, held out for a few months longer against the troops of the Emperor, but the story of their final surrender will best be told in connection with the invasion of the Alamannic brethren,

whose deeds and whose reverses, though they come in the order of time soon after the death of Teias, seem to belong to another cycle of narrative. All the other Goths—the remnant of that mighty host which, sixteen years before, marched as they thought to certain victory under the walls of Rome—made their way sadly over the Alpine passes, bidding an eternal farewell to the fair land of their birth.

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They disappeared, those brave Teutons, out of whom, welded with the Latin race, so noble a people might have been made to cultivate and to defend the Italian peninsula. They were swallowed up in we know not what morass of Gepid, of Herulian, of Slavonic barbarism. There remained in Italy the Logothetes of Justinian.

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